

DAP: IGP's explanation on police assault a total lie
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Inspector-general of police (IGP) Ismail Omar's explanation on the blatant attack on journalists by police during the Bersih 3.0 rally is a complete lie, and his apology to an injured cameraman from The Malay Mail is a most insincere one, the DAP says.

Ismail's explanation clearly showed that the IGP refused to accept police responsibility, DAP national publicity secretary Tony Pua said in a statement issued today.

NONEAccording to a Bernama report yesterday, Ismail apologised to The Malay Mail cameraman, Muhammad Arif Kartono, for being "roughed up" by the police during the rally.

Muhammad Arif is quoted in The Malay Mail of April 30 as saying that he suffered injuries to his head and body after being attacked by seven to eight police personnel.

Ismail argued that police could not tell the difference between the assembly participants and members of the media during the chaos.

This statement, Pua said, was a complete lie and showed that the IGP was still not willing to embrace the truth and take all the necessary actions to punish the guilty police officers.

"Muhammad Arif stated very clearly that he identified himself with his media tag to the policemen who had tried to stop him from taking photos of a Bersih participant being manhandled.

"Muhammad Arif was not the only journalist who was a victim to police violence. All other journalists who were either arrested or beaten up had identified themselves to the police with their media tags.

'Lying to protect his officers'

"However the police ignored the identifications and proceeded to hit these media personnel, destroy their photography equipment and in some cases, confiscated their media tags," he said.

Hence the Petaling Jaya Utara MP pointed out, Ismail's explanation was a complete lie to protect his guilty officers.

"His apology is therefore clearly insincere and insufficient, for he must accept blame and give an unreserved apology to the entire press corps for intimidation and abuse they have suffered as a result of reckless police action."

NONEThe IGP's statement, said Pua, also implied that it was perfectly all right for police officers to beat up the Bersih participants as long as they were not journalists, despite the fact that most of them were not fighting the police or damaging public property.

"The IGP must clarify whether it is legal and acceptable for the police force to beat up and injure assembly participants who were gathering peacefully and were not in any way resisting arrest.

"It is an absolute tragedy for this so-called democratic country that our IGP, who is supposed to uphold the law and protect ordinary Malaysians, sees it as completely acceptable for police officers to randomly hit and injure the very people they are sworn to protect," he said.

Pua urged the police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to demonstrate no fear or favour and uphold the principle that all are equal before the law by investigating and punishing all - both police

officers and assembly participants - who committed violence during the Bersih assembly.

"We would like to state that we support all actions by the police to arrest those who damaged public property and committed violence against police officers during the Bersih rally.

'Easy for police to track errant officers'

"However, the police cannot act by just arresting the few unruly Bersih participants but not take immediate action against the scores of its officers for committing violence against innocent participants and journalists.

"In fact, it should be so much easier for the police to track down all the errant police officers caught beating up innocent Malaysians on video and photographs than to track down Bersih participants," Pua said.

Should the police force only go after Bersih participants, he stressed, it would show a clear abuse of power and a great injustice to the innocent Malaysians who were assembling peacefully to uphold their rights.

He called upon the CID to arrest all police officers who were caught on video and photographs clearly committing violence, suspend them during investigation and charge the guilty ones in court for violent conduct and for failing to uphold their oath to protect the public.

"The CID will only lose the confidence of ordinary Malaysians throughout the country if it shows itself to be biased, and fails to bring the guilty police officers to book," Pua added.

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