

DAP in pre-emptive strike over Bersih 3.0 video

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Just hours before the Home Ministry is scheduled to release its version of Bersih 3.0 rally footage, the DAP has launched its video on the April 28 street protest in Kuala Lumpur.

Focusing on police brutality, the 15-minute edited video, entitled 'Bersih 3.0 Semangat Bersih, Harapan Negara' (Bersih 3.0 Clean Spirit, Hope of the Nation), has Malay subtitles and a narrative.

National publicity secretary Tony Pua, who screened the video at a press conference at DAP headquarters this morning, said the footage proves that the rally was a peaceful and joyous one until the police got involved.

“There was no reason why the police should have acted in such an aggressive fashion against unarmed Malaysians,” he said.

The video, Pua said, also exposes the prime minister’s “clear-cut discrepancy and hypocrisy” on the rally for clean and fair elections.

To back this, the footage has a clip of Najib Abdul Razak pledging publicly in Kuching, Sarawak, on April 27, that the government would protect the safety of the demonstrators even to the extent of providing them with mineral water and food if they are thirsty and hungry.

During the rally, however, chemical-laced water and tear gas were fired at protestors on the fringes of Dataran Merdeka, while many were allegedly beaten up by police personnel.

The DAP attempted to justify the reaction of the protesters in overturning a police car by showing that the car had crashed into a crowd, and by arguing that the protesters had thought that people were caught under the vehicle.

The footage makes the claim that several protesters had protected the cop in the car from being attacked by fellow-protesters.

Asked why the video fails to show the breach of the barricades at Dataran Merdeka, Pua said this is an issue subject to debate.

He also said the claim that PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim and deputy president Azmin Ali had given hand signals to supporters to lift the barricades, has yet to be proven.

“Even if the protesters breached the barricade, that does not justify the violence against those who did not do so. Why should the police go all the way to (the) Sogo (department store) to beat up protesters?” he asked.

'Video war' decision slammed

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, who was present at the press conference, slammed Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's decision to kick off a video war to support official version of what happened on April 28.

“This is a most deplorable development post-Bersih 3.0, as it is a continuation of the vilification and demonisation campaign launched by the BN government against Bersih 3.0 and Pakatan Rakyat,” he said.

Hishammuddin's insistence to upload the video compilation, Lim commented, only confirmed suspicions that the real objective of independent panel led by former police chief Hanif Omar is to produce a finding to match the government script.

On Monday, Hanif said his panel had been shown over 43 minutes of the Home Ministry's video on the April 28 rally out of a total of 73 hours of clips available.

The Ipoh Timor MP also agreed with Suhakam Commissioner Muhammad Sha'ani Abdullah who said that Hishammuddin's uploading of the Bersih 3.0 video compilation is against the government objective of setting up the Hanif panel, as it could only be interpreted as a form of pressure to influence both the investigation and outcome of the inquiry.

However, when asked why DAP released its own video if it disagrees with Hishammuddin's action, Lim did not directly answer but repeated that Hishammuddin as Home Minister should investigate the truth, and not be a part of the demonisation campaign.

Lim further stressed that the priority duty of Hishammuddin is not to be accused, judge, jury and executioner all in one but to give full support for an independent, impartial and credible investigation.

“What Hishammuddin should do is to give full support to the Suhakam inquiry into Bersih 3.0 and dissolve the Hanif panel now that two of the six members, former Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Steve Shim and Petronas corporate affairs senior general manager Medan Abdullah have withdrawn from the panel.

“How can Hishammuddin expect the public to have faith and confidence that he would discharge his duties as Home Minister fairly and impartially when he is not prepared to give full support for a credible, independent and impartial inquiry such as the Suhakam inquiry instead of the Hanif inquiry?” he added.

