

More violence at Pakatan ceramah in Malacca
MalaysiaKini.com
March 8, 2013
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In yet another incident of political violence, several Pakatan Rakyat supporters and two police officers were injured at a ceramah last night in Bukit Katil, Malacca after it was disrupted by thugs said to be from Umno.

PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said that in the incident, at about 9pm, rocks and other projectiles were hurled at the party's 'Jelajah Merdeka' campaign bus, thereby shattering its windows.

He told a press conference that the resulting glass shards fell onto the party de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, his bodyguard, and other staff - some of whom suffered minor cuts.

However, Anwar, who was descending the staircase of the double-decker bus at the time, escaped unhurt.

Saifuddin noted that this is the sixth attack on the bus since it was launched in August last year. Previous attacks have taken place in Perak, Johor and Kelantan, whereas this incident marks their second attack in Malacca.

When the bus was shown to the media outside the party's headquarters in Petaling Jaya, its door window and one upper deck window on the left side was found to be broken, while the front window of the upper deck had been cracked in the shape of a bull's eye about the size of an old 50 sen coin.

The bus also bears red paint marks from the previous attacks.

Meanwhile, a photograph posted by Pakatan supporters on Facebook shows a man bleeding profusely from his head after being hit by a stone.

Cops also injured

Berita Harian reported that two cops, who were stationed to maintain security at the ceramah, were injured and hospitalised after stones believed to be thrown by "supporters of a political party" hit their heads.

The Malay daily quoted Melaka Tengah district police chief Salehuddin Abd Rahman as saying that the incident happened at around 11.15pm when Anwar had just finished his speech and was leaving for Sungai Udang.

A statement issued by Bukit Katil PAS division identifies the victim as Abdul Ghani Buang, 44, a resident of Kampung Bukit Lintang.

"I saw bottles thrown and I could avoid them, but I could not see the stone thrown, that's why it hit me," Ghani was quoted as saying in the statement.

He also expressed regret that the police did nothing to stop the violence.

"They threw stones right in front of the police, but police just ignored this," Ghani (right) said.

Rasah parliamentarian Loke Siew Fook, who spoke during the ceramah, said Umno held a counter-ceramah at the same venue.

"I just arrived in Malacca for the PKR Bukit Katil ceramah with (Opposition Leader) Anwar Ibrahim.

"Thousands of people were there," the DAP leader tweeted late yesterday.

"Umno has a counter-ceramah nearby, which was attended by only a few hundred people. This is the action of those who fear losing (the general election).

The rakyat will continue to rise

"The rise of the rakyat to oust the BN regime will continue. They will not bow to Umno's intimidation," Loke said.

Riot police were brought in to restore peace, but they had a tough time controlling the intruders.

On Sunday, another ceramah was disrupted by BN supporters in Teluk Intan, Perak.

Local MP M Manogaran had to be escorted out of the DAP ceramah venue by police after a group of intruders carrying BN flags, numbering around 40, gate-crashed the function and hurled abuses at Pakatan leaders.

Saifuddin criticised the authorities for their lack of action in curbing such instances of political violence, and the lack on condemnation from the prime minister and Umno president Najib Abdul Razak, and Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein.

"There were arrests, (and) there were identification parades. That means that the assailant was apprehended, but was never charged in court.

"So these thugs get the message that they can repeat what they have done to their heart's content because they will never be charged," he said.

He stressed that the nation's leaders should condemn the violence just as they had condemned the violent methods used by the Sulu terrorists in Sabah as a matter of

principle, even though the two incidents are different in scale.

Saifuddin: Police chief biased

Saifuddin also accused Malacca police chief Chua Ghee Lye for being unprofessional and biased against the opposition by allegedly uttering words such as "I have no respect for Anwar" and blaming yesterday's ruckus on PKR for holding the ceramah in an 'Umno area'.

"Where is there such a thing as 'Umno area' or 'PKR area' in Malaysia? It is not as if we are giving talks in an Umno base.

"Therefore, I am of the opinion that Chua is not fit to wear the police uniform because he is one-sided and very, very biased against opposition parties, especially PKR," he said.

Saifuddin added that he would seek a meeting inspector-general of police Ismail Omar after the latter has finished dealing the Lahad Datu incident, to discuss on a safety guarantee to enable political parties to campaign freely.

He noted that just prior to the Jan 12 'People's Uprising Rally', Ismail had pledged that the police would act fairly and be professional in protecting all the people as well as the political parties in Malaysia.

Malaysiakini has contacted Chua for his comment regarding the incident and is awaiting a response.

Suspect remanded

Meanwhile the police said they have remanded a 24-year-old male in relation to the incident.

Melaka Tengah police chief assistant commissioner Salehuddin Abdul Rahman said he will be detained until March 11 and investigated under Section 506 of the Penal Code.

The injured police have received outpatient treatment at Malacca Hospital, he said.

He said the police have received two police reports on the incident.

One was lodged by the PKR bus driver whose vehicle suffered damage, while the other was made by the police themselves over the injury of their officers.

Salehuddin said it was unfortunate that the organisers of both ceramah had not observed the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012, for failing to inform the police about the events.

He added that the arrival of the police had helped to restore order by calling for the ceramah to be terminated.

Additional reporting by Ahmad Fadli KC

Serenely BN Malacca may be shifting at last

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Source: <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/223251>