Info Dept vehicles used at BN Batu ops centre launch
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By Koh Jun Lin

Three vehicles belonging to the Information Department were used to facilitate the opening of BN's election command centre for the Batu parliamentary constituency in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

However, Malaysiakini's attempt to obtain official comments on the possible abuse of government machinery were aggressively turned down by the organisers of the event.
The vehicles consisted of a SUV with loudspeakers mounted on the roof to broadcast speeches during the event. The other two were a SUV and a van parked nearby.

BN Batu information secretary Rodzi Tajudin directed Malaysiakini to speak to Suhaimi Yahya (left) for comments, saying that he had organised the day's proceedings.

Suhaimi was seen speaking via a microphone bearing the Information Department logo.

Malaysiakini: I would like to ask about that van.

Suhaimi: What about it?

Malaysiakini: Would it constitute an abuse of…

Suhaimi: Another time.

Malaysiakini: Next time? But I am going to write about this.

Suhaimi: How am I supposed to know? You have eyes, read it yourself.

Malaysiakini: Why is this van…

Suhaimi stops walking and turns around, saying: "Hey! You are lucky I haven't smacked you yet …"

At this point, an unidentified man wearing a BN shirt stepped in and forced Malaysiakini to leave the venue, shouting "Go back", "Don't cause trouble", and "Don't you dare look back".

Bersih's election campaigning and caretaker government guidelines stipulate that reporters should not be hindered in performing their duties.

These further advise against the use of government resources during election campaigning.

'Don't take support for granted'

The guest of honour, BN deputy chairperson Muhyiddin Yassin, had already left the venue when this took place.
In his speech, he had drummed up the morale of some 300 supporters and urged them to redeem BN's defeat in the constituency.

"The statement of (incumbent Batu MP) Tian Chua (regarding the Lahad Datu incident) was highly irresponsible. The people of Batu should be ashamed of this parliamentarian's behaviour," he said.

He said that, although the rakyat are now more appreciative of BN with its many aid schemes, their support should not be taken for granted.

"Nobody can force them to vote, they decide everything," he added.

Chua, who is a PKR vice-president, had attracted a series of occasionally violent protests when party organ Suara Keadilan quoted him as saying that the Lahad Datu incident was an Umno conspiracy.

He later clarified his statement, saying it was only a reference to a media blackout on the incursion, given that there had been no confirmation of any attack or casualties at the time.

Malaysiakini has contacted Information Department director-general Ibrahim Abdul Rahman today for comment regarding the use of the vehicles, and is awaiting a response.

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