BN's Hamidah blacklisted for political violence
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Bersih has added BN's Sungai Rapat candidate Hamidah Othman to its blacklist of those perpetuating political violence, for allegedly pulling PKR's Gopeng candidate Dr Lee Boon Chye by the collar.

She had also apparently grabbed a PKR worker's camera, threw it on the ground during a scuffle between both parties' supporters on April 22 evening in Taman Tasik Permai, Batu Gajah.

"This behaviour cannot be tolerated, so we are blacklisting Hamidah (right) for this form of violence against an opposition candidate," said Bersih Special Committee on Code of Conduct co-chairperson Irene Fenandez in a press conference today.

According to the English-language daily The Star, Hamidah had dismissed the allegations as "ridiculous".

She blamed Lee for provoking BN supporters by attempting to set up an operations centre near theirs.

Hamidah (right), who is also a Perak caretaker exco member and state Umno information chief, joins two others on the list, namely caretaker Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and caretaker Defence Minister Zahid Hamidi.

The blacklist is part of Bersih's 'name and shame' campaign against political violence and election misconduct.

The group also expressed concern about the escalating trend of political violence, which they say has been increasing in both frequency and severity.

They quoted the police saying that there have been 1,056 cases of election-related violence and misdemeanours since the dissolution of parliament on April 3 as of April 23, and urged all politicians to condemn it and prevent future incidents.

"No one should be threatened. No one should be hurt. We must move towards having clean elections by freeing ourselves from political violence.

"There has to be proper briefings given to all party workers, and political parties

should monitor them so that anyone (who acted out of bounds) should be apprehended and dismissed as a party worker," said Irene.

She urged the police to be swift, alert and impartial in handling incidents of political violence to bolster public confidence so that the incidents would not instil fear amongst voters.

Reporter pressured into deleting photos

One of Bersih's special committee members, Yap Swee Seng, also expressed concern over police conduct when a Nanyang Siang Pau reporter tried to lodge a police report about political violence against her on April 21.

She was reportedly covering election preparations at BN's operations centre in Indera Mahkota, Kuantan, when party workers 'misconstrued' her for attempting to disrupt preparations and began to harass her and attack her car.

However, BN workers were already at the police station when she arrived to lodge a report of the incident, who pressured her into deleting photos documenting the threats against her. The police supposedly joined in and she eventually relented.

"This is not acceptable at all for the police officers, because the police officers should be receiving complaints and cases as it is and investigate. It should be professional; it should be impartial.

"It should not destroy evidence of threats and intimidation against anyone," Yap said.

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