

Penang Umno Youth No 2 denies involvement in fracas

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By Susan Loone

Penang Umno Youth deputy chief Norman Zahalan today denied ever being involved in the thuggery during Monday's candlelight vigil to demand the release of student Adam Adli Abdul Halim.

Adam is currently being held at the Jinjang police detention centre and is being investigated under sedition charges.

NONE Norman lodged a report at the Sungai Nibong police station today on a tweet by DAP Serdang MP Ong Kian Ming, allegedly accusing him of being involved in the incident where the peaceful rally was disrupted by a rowdy group of 15.

Norman also lodged a report that his car - a black Perdana sedan - was damaged, with the windscreens shattered after the incident.

At the candlelight vigil by about 30 participants in front of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), two journalists - from Malaysiakini and Nanyang Siang Pau - were hit by the thugs when they were photographing the incident, and the duo have since lodged police reports as well.

"I was just passing by when I saw the protest. When I arrived at about 9pm, the event almost ended and I told a few students to go home," he told reporters, after lodging the report.

NONE "But I was not violent against anyone. Why must Ong (left) tweet such an inciting statement? He must be careful of his words as he is an MP," Norman said.

"His tweet can incite people to be angry. When I went to get my car that night - which was parked at another location - I found it damaged.

"I am not blaming anyone, but I want the police to investigate the matter thoroughly," added the Bayan Baru Umno Youth chief.

Media reports on the fracas said Norman was spotted at the event and was seen telling participants to leave the rally.

In an immediate response, Ong said that he did not state anybody's name in his tweet.

"It could be a number of persons from Umno Youth. I was merely referring to news reports about the incident," he said when contacted.

NONE "If Norman wants to make an issue of this, he should take it up with the newspapers," Ong said.

When contacted, state Umno Youth chief Shaik Hussein Mydin (right) defended Norman, and condemned Ong for involving Umno Youth in his tweet when they had not been part of the violence.

"His tweet will definitely make people angry with Umno Youth when (the fact is,) we were not involved in that incident," he said.

"Ong is too much, he is wrong and he should apologise to Norman and Umno Youth for involving us," Shaik Hussein added.

'Ong purposely bringing us ill repute'

Shaik Hussein said he could not stop anyone from holding a protest, but vehemently denied that the wing was involved with the group that disrupted the peaceful rally.

Meanwhile, at the same police station, USM student council members have also lodged a report over the incident, asking the police to ensure the safety of the students at future rallies.

"We are not blaming anyone, but we want the police to make sure that such fights do not happen in the future. If they (the police) were there, the incident should not end in violence," said student leader Loh Kit Mun.

NONE However, the Student Representative Council distanced itself from the rally, saying it had been organised by the "unregistered" Students Progressive Front.

"We are very concerned about the safety of students and the organisers of the rally should ensure that, but we were blamed for it," said council treasurer Chuah Wen Xu (right).

"It was beyond us, since it was held outside the university. We strongly urge the students' front not to put students at risk, and that they should take safety measures to protect them," Chuah said.

"We would also like to clarify that the front does not represent the voice of USM students as they are not a registered body," he added.

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