

PKR: Act on custodial death or face protests

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By Koh Jun Lin

PKR has threatened to launch a major protest at the Bukit Aman federal police headquarters for failing to take action against those responsible for detainee N Dharmendran's death.

pkr dharmendran dang wangi police 260513 surendran Calling this the worst death-in-custody case he has dealt with in his 15 years of handling human rights matters, PKR vice-president N Surendran (right) said a civilian would have been arrested immediately for a much lesser crime.

And yet, he said no action has been taken so far against those involved in the murder of Dharmendran, who died at the Kuala Lumpur police headquarters lock-up on May 21.

"The pathologist has already confirmed that Dharmendran was murdered in police custody. Why are there no police officers arrested to date?"

"The murderer's identity is already known in this case. The police only need to find all the police officers who questioned and tortured Dharmendran," Surendran said today.

He called for the immediate arrest of the police officers involved, and for attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail to press murder charges against them.

24 hour ultimatum

He said he would see if the police take action in the next 24 hours before deciding whether to go ahead with the protest.

pkr dharmendran dang wangi police 260513 mary mariay susay Surendran, who spoke as the family lawyer, said this to reporters after accompanying Dharmendran's widow Mary Mariay Susay (right) and about 20 family members to lodge a fresh police report over the death at the Dang Wangi district police headquarters.

In this second police report, Mary Mariay cited the pathologist's finding that her husband was murdered and complained that she was not kept informed of the developments in the case.

Thus far, Surendran said, he received a call from the investigating officer just after lodging a police report, asking Mary Mariay to have her statement recorded.

While welcoming this and saying that he would cooperate, Surendran reiterated that the culprits should have been arrested by now.

On Thursday, Kuala Lumpur police chief Mohamad Salleh said Bukit Aman has formed a task force to investigate the case under Section 302 of the Penal Code for murder.

This follows the government pathologist's report that Dharmendran had died of "multiple blunt force trauma", with staples attached to his ears as well as signs of stapling on his legs and ankles.

However, Surendran complained that despite the task force and Mohamad's statements on May 23 that the task force has already begun working on the case, nothing is known of its progress.

Had to bribe to see husband

Meanwhile, Dharmendran's family members carried placards and banners outside the police station denouncing the police as "bloodthirsty", calling for justice and the formation of an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC).

In an emotionally charged protest against the police, Mary Mariay, who was carrying her two-year-old son, lamented among other matters that she had to bribe her way to visit her husband while he was still alive in the lock-up last week to ensure that he was properly fed.

NONEShe said she was told to offer the police personnel on duty several packs of chicken rice, cans of sports drinks and sticks of cigarettes.

However, no amount of money can bring her husband back now, she said.

Asked whether a report has been lodged over the alleged bribery, Surendran said the family has not done so because the members have been busy with other issues. However, it will have to be lodged soon since, since Mary Mariay had raised the issue.

There was also a brief commotion within the police station compound while the

police report was being lodged.

NONEReporters rushing to witness the scene found PKR human rights and legal affairs bureau deputy chairperson S Jayathas (left) on the ground.

Jayathas was surrounded by about 20 police officers while those guarding the gate quickly closed it. This lasted several minutes before he got up and entered the police station.

Earlier, at about 11.35am Jayathas was accompanying Dharmendran's family and Surendran to lodge the police report, and came out of the police station to inform reporters waiting outside that the process would take another 10 minutes.

Speaking to reporters after he left the police station for the second time, Jayathas claimed that he was not allowed to re-enter the police station and was shoved to the ground, until Surendran came out of the station to intervene.

He has lodged a police report on this, naming the police officer who shoved him down.

"I want Bukit Aman to investigate the issue, not here (IPD Dang Wangi). I don't trust the people here," Jayathas said.

Surendran also denounced the large police presence when the report was being lodged, saying it amounted to intimidation against Dharmendran's family and lawyers, who were only seeking justice.

Cops: Only crowd control

Meanwhile according to Bernama, Dang Wangi police chief ACP Zainuddin Ahmad in a statement explained the commotion saying the police were forced to tighten security and was merely trying to manage the crowd.

pkrdharmendran dang wangi police 260513 jayathasHe said they were trying to prevent the whole group from entering all at once to reduce the congestion at the enquiries counter, as there were also other members of the public who were in the premises for their respective purposes.

He said the media statement was also to avoid any confusion over an incident at the station today, in which a man Zainuddin did not name, had suddenly rushed in through the restricted area, shoving off a policeman and cursing him before throwing himself down on the pathway at the entrance to the enquiries office.

According to Zainuddin, the man was lying there for about 10 to 15 seconds and sprang up when he heard a policeman calling for an ambulance.

"There was no force involved but police have filed a report against the man under section 353 of the Penal Code for using criminal force to deter a public servant from discharging his duty," he added.

Zainuddin was likely to be referring to Jayathas.

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