

Reezal: I respect Kit Siang for suggesting apology

MalaysiaKini.com

Jan 25, 2014

In an apparent move to tick off some NGOs for supporting his critics, Umno supreme council member Reezal Merican Naina Merican did the unlikely and expressed his respect for a senior opposition leader.

Reezal said he respected the "political maturity" of DAP veteran leader Lim Kit Siang when he asked Machang Bubuk assemblyperson Lee Khai Loon to apologise over the kangkung-themed flash mob he organised on Jan 17.

"But Lee is clearly arrogant when he rejected Lim's advice to do so," said Reezal in a statement.

Lee, together with 15 others, held the event in Alma, Bukit Mertajam near his service centre, where an effigy of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was stuffed with kangkung (water spinach).

The act had been done in jest, but the group wanted to send a clear message that the people were angry over the series of price hikes in the country.

Penang Umno leaders and their allies were incensed over the act, subsequently holding two counter rallies in Seberang Jaya and Alma last weekend, and where the second event had ended up in violence.

In Seberang Jaya, racially-charged statements were proclaimed as pro-Najib supporters were seen carrying a banner warning of a repeat of the May 13, 1969 racial riots, while blaming DAP for allegedly instigating the tragedy.

In the midst of all this, Lim had issued a statement urging Lee to apologise for the act of stuffing Najib's replica with the green vegetable "to avoid" a possible recurrence of May 13, although the young leader had declined to do so.

Responding to these developments, 35 NGOs jointly issued a statement condemning Penang Umno for acting like samseng (gangsters) to arm-twist the 'kangkung flash mob' incident into a racial issue.

'Look at both sides'

Reezal urged the NGOs not to practise double standards and implored for an end of "gangster (samseng) politics".

Reezal added that, while he respected their differing views, they should also be looking at the other side of the coin.

He pointed out that the main focus of the two rallies by NGOs in Penang last weekend (Jan 18 and 19) were against Lee's "rude behaviour".

"Does the coalition of NGOs feel that Lee's act was right and good? Was he not rude and ill-mannered?" Reezal asked.

Reezal stressed that he will not stay silent when Najib, his leader, is being insulted by others.

He said it was unfair to describe others as democratic, but label Umno members as "racists" for voicing out their dissenting views.

Citing another example to back his claims, Reezal questioned the NGOs' stand on the scuffle that broke out between Himpunan Hijau leader Wong Tack and some security personnel during an Australian Day function in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre where Lynas Corporation officials had been present.

"Don't talk about mature democracy when NGOs become tools to cover up the rudeness of their leaders," he said, adding that such terms must apply to both sides of the political divide.

"Since when is insulting a leader considered mature democracy?" he queried.

He insisted that Lee was "rude and ill-mannered", questioning the relevance of feeding Najib's replica with kangkung, and the increasing price hikes.

To Reezal, Lee's act was clearly meant to insult Najib as there are many other ways to protest against the rise in cost of essential goods.