

## **Rafizi's arrest cruel blow to institutions of Parliament, family**

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COMMENT I was unfortunate enough to witness Rafizi's arrest yesterday. Having confirmed his attendance at a Terengganu ceramah next week on his way out of Parliament Hall, I saw him waiting for his car as I walked to mine.

As I drove out of the Parliament front entrance I was surprised to see a large crowd of people and police surrounding Rafizi's car. I then saw Rafizi being led out by some police from his car into another waiting car.

As I was driving my own car, I drew alongside the car Rafizi was taken to. Through the car's open window I called out to Rafizi and asked him what was happening and who should I inform of the incident.

As Rafizi was about to answer me, his car window was wound up to cut out our conversation. I was told by some police officers to move on as I was blocking traffic flow.

What shocked me was not so much Rafizi's arrest but the location and circumstances of his arrest. He was arrested virtually right on the doorstep of our Parliament after carrying out his duty to the rakyat as a parliamentarian.

I always thought of Parliament as an institution to be respected and a sacred sanctity. After all, we have certain immunity within the Parliament to perform our duty.

A resolution traditionally tabled at the start of Parliament sittings states that the inspector-general of police should ensure the smoothness of ingress and egress to and from Parliament so parliamentarians may perform their duty.

### **Clear warning**

Rafizi's arrest right at the doorstep of Parliament's entrance is seen as a challenge to the members of Parliament's right of passage to and from their place of duty, to serve their country.

I am of the view it is a deliberate attempt to intimidate members of Parliament at the sacred location where they perform their duty. It is a clear warning to opposition members that no place is safe.

Imagine if a member of the Agong's palace officials were arrested on leaving the palace grounds after performing his duty to the Agong. Parliament is also a place where we serve our Agong and the rakyat.

There are hundreds of other places and times Rafizi could have been arrested but why was the gate of Parliament deliberately chosen, if not as a clear message of intimidation to the opposition parliamentarians? It was done in bad taste.

Secondly, the timing of Rafizi's arrest was cruelly chosen to break the spirit of Rafizi and his family. Again there are perhaps hundreds of other times and places he could have been arrested but why at this particular time and place?

I am sure the police know his exact routines. I am sure they know Rafizi would pick up his two-year-old son from childcare in the evening after Parliament since his wife is working.

I cannot forget the upset expression on Rafizi's face and his gestures as he was led to the other car. Even during heated parliamentary debates, I have never seen that expression on his face.

As a father and parent I feel and totally sympathise with him thinking of his two-year-old innocent toddler waiting for the father who would not be turning up to take him home.

### **Totally despicable**

It is absolute cruelty to make an innocent two-year-old child suffer for something he cannot understand and is totally innocent of. Rafizi pleaded to be allowed to pick up his son before going to the police station but to no avail.

It is one thing to break Rafizi's spirit but it is totally despicable to let an innocent toddler suffer for the cruelty of mind games by the authorities.

The authorities should be ashamed of this act of cruelty on the two-year-old child. Whatever has happened to our 'keluarga dan masyarakat penyayang (a loving family and community)' ? Malaysia is truly losing its soul.

Rafizi's location and time of arrest is a deliberate cruel attack on the Parliament as an institution, and the institution of the family, and responsibilities as parents that we hold sacred, no matter what our religion is.

Where is Malaysia heading to? We have a lot of deep soul-searching to do to comprehend how low we have come to, from a once fine nation called Malaysia.