

Ijok bus incident: Cops continue probe on 14
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The police are focusing on the 'intimidation' tactic allegedly used by opposition members in stopping two buses during the Ijok by-election last Saturday.

Contacted today, Selangor CID chief Tajuddin Md Isa said investigation into the incident is still ongoing but was hopeful that the probe could be completed by the end of next week.

"We are investigating from the aspects of threats and intimidation against the 14 opposition members allegedly involved (in the incident)," he added.

He said there were many eyewitnesses, referring to the dozens of bus passengers whom opposition members claimed were 'phantom' voters.

Tajuddin said the 14 are being investigated under Section 341 of the Penal Code for wrongful restraint.

If found guilty, they can face up to one month jail or a maximum RM1,000 fine, or both.

The opposition had claimed that they received a tip-off prior to the incident that the two buses were ferrying 'phantom' voters who possessed two identity cards (ICs).

The Selangor CID chief however refused to comment on both questions pertaining to whether the passengers were holding two ICs or if they were 'phantom' voters.

"No comment, the investigation is still going on," he said, adding that he could only provide more details on the case once the investigation is completed.

Standoff, scuffles ensued

During last Saturday's incident, the two buses were blocked by hundreds of opposition supporters about 100 metres away from the Bukit Badong polling station at about 4pm.

The buses, with mostly women on board, bore Penang licence plates PGY7000 and PFX7000. They are owned by a company based in Kuala Perlis.

After a 30-minute standoff and negotiation between the opposition group and police including the Federal Reserve Unit personnel, the two buses, along with the passengers, were escorted to the nearby Pekan Ijok police station.

During the standoff, minor scuffles ensued between supporters from both camps, and a rock was thrown at one of the buses' windscreen, cracking it.

The buses and passengers were allowed to leave for Perlis after they were held at the police station for about four hours.

However, the opposition has criticised the move as they said they still had no clue over the identity of the group and the buses were allowed to leave when the police were recording

statements from the 14 opposition members.

They also failed in their attempt to demand the police to allow them to verify the identities of the passengers on the two buses.

The 14, including ex-PKRYouth chief Ezam Mohd Nor and current acting Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin, were released on police bail later.

According to Shamsul, they were required to report back to the police station on May 29.

Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin who was also at the police station last Saturday claimed that the passengers were Barisan Nasional supporters from Perlis while another Perlis Umno leader said the group were Umno members who had come to help the BN camp in the by-election as cooks.

In the by-election called following the death of incumbent K Sivalingam on April 4, BN's K Parthiban defeated PKR candidate Khalid Ibrahim with a 1,850-majority vote.

During the 2000 Lunas by-election, PKR leaders also stopped a few buses which they claimed were ferrying 'phantom' voters.

PKR defeated BN in that by-election with a razor-thin majority of 530 votes.

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