

**2 held at anti-subsidy cuts campaign launch**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**August 09, 2010**

Two members of the Protest Movement Against Price Hikes - or Protes - were arrested just prior to the launch of its latest campaign at the evening market at Kampung Kerinchi, Kuala Lumpur today.

kerinchi protes arrest 090810 rozan mat saripSuaram Coordinator Tah Moon Hui and PKR Batu Youth chief Rozan Azen Mat Razip were arrested after allegedly refusing to heed a police request to open a car for inspection.

PKR Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar said they had refused to open the car for the police because the car belonged to another activist.

"But we are not sure exactly why were they arrested. Our lawyers are at the Lembah Pantai police station to assist them," he told reporters after the launch of campaign.

The campaign was suppose to kick off at 5pm but only started half an hour later because the organisers were trying to decide on a location to conduct the launch. Dozens of uniformed police personnel were seen milling about the market grounds.

kerinchi protes arrest 090810 tah moon huiParti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) secretary-general S Arutchelvan said their purpose at the market was to distribute leaflets and that was not against the law.

"We just want to educate the public on the price hikes and the wastage issues. The people can decide for themselves," he told reporters.

'Democratic rights taken away'

Halfway through the launch while NGO Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas (Oppressed People's Network) representative Y Kohila' was giving her speech, a police officer approached the crowd and asked them to disperse.

However, after a brief negotiation between Arutchelvan and the policeman, Kohila was allowed to continue with her speech.

Batu parliamentarian Tian Chua, who was present, expressed his disappointment over the arrests.

NONE"Not just subsidies have been retracted but the people's freedom of speech has also been forbidden. Our democratic rights have been taken away. A government who is afraid of its people will not survive," he said.

Protes coordinator and PAS treasurer Mohd Hatta Ramli reiterated their stand to educate the public and to demand for the subsidies to be returned to the people.

"Although it is only a few sen increase for some items, this could be a big amount for someone who does not earn a lot. We will conduct a series of events and talks to educate the people.

"Our last resort would be to hold a big demonstration if the government do not make any move for the people," he said.

Leaflets distributed

Other speakers at the launch included Jamaah Islah Malaysia secretary-general Nahar Md Nor, Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia student representative Mohd Izzuddin Mohd Zaini, PSM chairperson Dr Mohd Nasir Hashim, Kota Raja parliamentarian Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud and Shamsul.

NONE About 30 members of the coalition were present and helped distributed leaflets to the public during the event.

Protes had before this vowed to launch nationwide campaigns to protest the government's decision to raise the prices of petrol, diesel, sugar and liquefied petroleum gas due to subsidy cuts.

The movement's leaders claimed that their campaign was important to ensure that the rakyat understood the subsidy cuts and to press the government to pay heed to the needs of the rakyat first.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/139595>