

Umno's 'cheap shot' at animal rights ruffles feathers
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Animal rights and welfare groups today demanded an apology from Selangor Umno Youth delegate Zainuri Zainal, who had accused them of attempting to incite public hatred against the government.

"We are very upset and shocked by this statement. We were criticised for speaking up for other living beings, going beyond our (own) difficulties to think of somebody else's," said Anthony Thanasayan, the president of Malaysian Animal-Assisted Therapy for the Disabled and Elderly Association (Petpositive).

He was referring to Selangor delegate Zainuri Zainal who at the Youth debates at Umno's 61th general assembly on Wednesday blasted a disabled rights group for protesting against the Kuala Langat Municipal Council for putting nine dogs to sleep on Sept 19.

The dogs were put down by lethal tranquillisers at the poultry farm in Sungai Gadung, the scene of the alleged murder of cosmetics millionaire Sosilawati Lawiya.

Several days later disabled rights group Independent Living and Training Centre and Petpositive had staged a protest against the municipal council, saying the dogs could have been handled by the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) or other animal welfare groups.

The council has since defended their actions saying that the dogs had posed a danger to police personnel investigating the murder case.

Zainuri at the assembly described their actions as an attempt to "draw public ire against the authorities".

"If (you) nothing positive to say about the disabled, please keep your mouth shut," said Thanasayan of Zainuri's outburst.

"If you want to speak about the disabled at the Umno meeting speak about the problems we are having in getting jobs, and lack of support.

"But if you have the audacity to criticise us for doing something nice and right for defenceless creatures, he should be ashamed and apologise to us," he said, chiding the Umno delegate for using them for "cheap publicity".

Implied of being 'terrorist'

Malaysian Animal Welfare Society president Shenaaz Khan also blasted Zainuri for suggesting that the protest was instigated by the Pakatan Rakyat government.

Shenaaz said that the suggestion was absurd as the groups were there on their own independent capacity, and their protest was against the Pakatan-run municipal council.

"He has suggested that (the protestors) are cheap, shallow and that they are for sale, and he implied that they are terrorist by trying to 'instill public hatred'," she said.

"I don't know what kind of ignorance permeates through Umno. They continue to make these stupid statements.

Shenaaz added that since the protest, the Selangor government has taken their complaints into consideration and has come up with new guidelines on how municipal councils should act in such cases.

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