

**Penang Umno Youth blasted over forum disruption**  
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Penang Gerakan and a host of civil society organisations have condemned Penang Umno Youth and other protesters who disrupted a forum on the Internal Security Act yesterday, saying they have used violence to deal with issues.

NONEThe state Gerakan's legal and human rights bureau chief Baljit Singh (right) criticised Penang Umno Youth chief Norman Dhalan and those representing the Komtar Merchants Association (KMA) for barging into the forum themed Alat Politik Untuk Penindasan, organised by civil society groups at Komtar Walk.

Baljit said the party is "disappointed and angry" with Norman who has been repeatedly involved in violent protests.

He said the use of violence would not help in conveying messages effectively. This would also create fear among the public, and would not help in Umno's efforts to rebuild its tarnished image.

"Being a responsible and reliable political leader, Norman is obliged to lead by example and should promote peace and harmony among Malaysians," Baljit added.

"Umno should look into this issue seriously, especially as Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is now advocating a moderate approach towards building our country."

penang attack on anti isa forum 211110 penang umno youth chief norman in blue shirtNorman has denied being involved in the protest, saying he was at Komtar Walk as a NGO member. He was nowhere to be seen towards the end of the protest, and reporters failed to obtain any comment from him.

The pro-ISA group claimed to be there to express its views about how the preventive detention law was useful to the nation, saying it was not to persecute the people but to deal with traitors "like those from Pakatan Rakyat".

Same faces

During the protest, a minor scuffle broke out between the protesters and organisers as the anti-ISA forum was still in progress.

Rozaimin Elias, a NGO representative, who tried to prevent the group from advancing to the stage was slapped by a protester, believed to be from Umno Youth.

However, one of the panelists, Hishamuddin Rais, managed to calm the protesters by inviting KMA vice-president Abdul Ghani Mohamad Jiman to present their views on why the ISA should be retained.

gmi indonesian embassy memo isa detainees 180108 e naliniMeanwhile, rights group Suaram said while it respects the right of the pro-ISA protesters to expression and assembly, the protestors must also understand and respect the views and expression of others.

"Everyone in a democratic society should be given an opportunity to discuss any issues in a civil and proper manner and in respect," said Suaram coordinator E Nalini (above) in a statement.

Nalini also criticised the police for the fracas that ensued following the arrival of the protestors.

"The assault on Rozaimin was unnecessary and could have been avoided if the police had taken control of the situation."

gerakan youth penang files police report penang cpo ayub yaakobNalini also described as "irresponsible" the remark by the Penang police chief Ayub Yaakob (left) who had said the organisers did not apply for a police permit to hold the event.

"We view the statement from the state chief is irresponsible as the police is duty bound to protect the rights of all people in any circumstances.

"Datuk Wira (Ayub)'s statements exposes his comments (as being) merely to cover up the weaknesses of the police (as they) they failed to control the situation.

"We wants to remind the police chief that, under Article 10 of the federal constitution, everyone has a right to express their views.

"We urged the police to play a neutral role rather than be biased towards the pro-ISA protesters," said Nalini.

"Suaram is of the view that the ISA is... a serious violation of fundamental human rights and (that) the draconian act must be repealed," she added.

Several other civil society organisations also weighed in on the issue and slammed the police for having failed to keep the situation under control and "allowing" the protestors to behave violently and without respect towards the forum organisers.

khairy jamaluddin kj interview 190310In a statement, the civil rights committee of the Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall and rights group LLG said dialogues and discussions serve to tackle differences of views within democratic society.

"The use of violence shows that Umno is not capable of discussions," they said in a statement signed by the Writers' Alliance for Media Independence, Suaram, the Islamic Renaissance Front and the Centre for Independent Journalism.

"We call on Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin (right) to take action over the incident and disciplinary measures against those Umno members who had taken physical action," they added.

The groups also reiterated their stand against the ISA as a "cruel" law that violates human rights and should be abolished immediately.

"The Internal Security Act clearly has been abused by the authorities to oppress their critics and those not happy with their rule," they added.

NONEMany of the protesters who turned up yesterday had also been at the noisy protest outside the Penang state legislature on Nov 2.

Norman (right) featured prominently during that protest, bringing with him a plastic bag containing RM23,700 in cash to be returned to the state government.

The money, Umno claimed, was collected from senior citizens who deemed as haram the RM100 award from the state government.

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