

**Parliament turns into a 'war zone'**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Jul 14, 2008**

The opposition today accused the government of turning Parliament into a "war zone" as armed police sealed off the building amid fears of a protest.  
MCPX

parliament building police blockade 140708 07Roads leading to parliament, which are important entry points to Kuala Lumpur, were closed down by 1,600 heavily armed police, causing massive traffic jams that left motorists fuming over the move.

The security measures were put in place as the opposition attempted to hold a parliamentary debate on the shortcomings of beleaguered Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is fending off calls to resign.

As expected, the parliament's speaker rejected the motion, triggering a walkout of lawmakers from the three-party opposition alliance led by Anwar Ibrahim.

opposition pakatan rakyat parliament walkout pc 140708 07"Today is a day we have never seen before in the history of the country, where parliament has become a war zone," said Anwar's wife, Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who leads the PKR.

Anwar was banned from coming to parliament by a court order.

The opposition has consistently denied it was planning a protest and there were no signs of gatherings at Parliament.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng from DAP condemned the decision to roll out police and barbed-wire barricades.

parliament building police blockade 140708 16"Why do we put Parliament under siege, turning Parliament into a police state? It is unnecessary and the government is trying to instil fear using the police," he told reporters.

"Parliament should be open to the public to participate so they can listen to the debates and see how participatory democracy works. What we want to see is democracy in action, not police in action," he said.

**'What are they preventing?'**

Also condemning the move was Wee Choo Keong (PKR-Wangsa Maju).

vk lingam hearing wee choo keong pc thirunama 180108 stern"It is ridiculous. It is like a war zone, as though we're not living in peace time. As though the parliament is going to be bombed or attacked by terrorist."

"What are they preventing? There has to be some basis... We have never had any form of protest with violence. Furthermore, for this one, there is no protest at all," he said.

Echoing this was Dr Hatta Ramli (PKR - Kuala Krai) who described the police's action as

'unnecessary'.

"The reaction of the police (was) not only today, it started almost two days ago. Even yesterday, people from the North-South expressway were all jammed up. And it was totally unnecessary.

"If we were to hold a rally, we would disseminate information at least through our own portal, our own newspaper. There is none.

"This is unnecessary and creates all sort of fear, anger. The sad thing is some people are blaming us (the opposition) for creating this kind of situation, it is not fair."

### **Syed Hamid apologies for traffic jams**

Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar defended the police measures, which included officers armed with assault rifles patrolling inside the parliament building, saying they had to take "preventive action".

parliament building police blockade 140708 15"I apologise to the public for the traffic jams but the police have to do their job to ensure a smooth access to parliament. With all sorts of threats and intimidation that come out, we cannot wait for things to happen," he said.

Kuala Lumpur police chief Mohd Sabtu Osman has described today's operation as a success.

He said at a press conference at the city's police headquarters this afternoon that the roadblocks manned by 1,600 police had stop the opposition protest from taking place.

Mohd Sabtu said that the roadblocks will be dismantled later today or at the latest by midnight.

Meanwhile, Nazri Aziz, the minister in charge of parliament, criticised the opposition's attempt to stage a debate that would have addressed criticisms of Abdullah and accusations that he has lost the country's confidence.

"I think the no-confidence motion is a waste of time. It is eating into the House's time to debate this motion which has no voting element and so it cannot resolve anything," he said.

In the March polls, the opposition alliance won a record number of 82 seats in the 222-seat lower house of parliament.

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