

Nazri : attack of media reps is bad publicity
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 21, 2008
S Pathmavathy & Ashley Boncimino

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz today condemned the attack on two press photographers on nomination day for the Permatang Pauh by-election. MCPX

french journalist attacked in permatang pauh parliament pc 210808 01 "As you all know there has been a spat of aggression and attack against journalists, regardless whether they are international or local reporters or photographers," he said.

"We are very concerned for two reasons; one of course is the infringement of the freedom of the press which we uphold in our constitution and (the fact that) we Malaysians (are) known for our hospitality and this is something which should not (have) happened," he added.

The minister was speaking to reporters in Parliament after receiving a memorandum from French photojournalist Halim Berbar, who was one of those assaulted last Saturday.

french journalist attacked in permatang pauh parliament pc 210808 halim berber In his memorandum, the journalist said he was not interested in blaming any party, but decried violence against all press members.

The police have arrested three people, including a PKR division leader, in connection with the case.

Meanwhile, Nazri pledged that parliamentarians would stand firm together to weed out the building aggression against media personnel.

"We have to address this problem and nip it in the bud before it is seen as something normal in this country...certainly it is bad publicity for Malaysia and as a government representative, I will take this matter up in the cabinet," he said.

Furthermore, the minister also appealed to the security forces to ensure the safety of everyone who is in Permatang Pauh.

"We appeal to the police to do everything within their means to ensure that incidents like what has been experienced by our friends here must never occur again.

"We hope swift action will be taken to ensure that the confidence of the journalists in this country will be restored," he said.

Working without fear or favour

In a related development, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng stressed DAP's stand against restriction of press freedom and its support for an independent media as a necessity for a democratic society.

french journalist attacked in permatang pauh parliament pc 210808 06 "DAP takes a very strong lead that these journalists and press photographers should be allowed to carry out their work

without any fear or intimidation. They should be able to carry out their duties freely. We also oppose laws that restrict the freedom of the press," he said.

His father, DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang cautioned against making a rash judgement on PKR's involvement in the case.

"PKR as well condemns any form of violence against journalists and also any form of restrictions against freedom of expression, legal or otherwise," he said, adding that police investigations should be fair.

Klang DAP MP Charles Santiago also stressed on the importance of protecting the media. "It is alarming to note the rising number of cases of media attacks in the country."

Subang PKR parliamentarian R Sivarasa furthered the calls for objective and fair local media, along with hopes for improved behaviour by the police in the future.

"Regretfully, we can see somewhat one-sided actions by the police," he said.

"These individuals actually acted to protect Halim Berbar and the New Straits Times photographer. Unfortunately the police arrested them as if they were the aggressors," he added.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/88286>