

Hindraf leaders arrested in Seberang Jaya
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Nine Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leaders, including national co-ordinator TS Thanenthiran, were arrested this evening after staging a protest against a splinter group outside a Chinese temple in Seberang Jaya, Penang.
MCPX

hindraf penang protest 230808 protestThe protest began around 2pm, swelling to about 200 people by the time the arrests were made. The splinter group, which also claims to represent Hindraf, was carrying out a bonfire prayer at the temple.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in town to help campaign for his coalition in the Permatang Pauh by-election, dropped by to visit the temple around 5.30pm. He chatted briefly with members of the splinter group and shook hands with some of them before leaving.

hindraf penang protest 230808 arrestSoon after that, the demonstration got out of hand and the arrests were made around 6.30pm.

Police said the nine people, including two women, were arrested for illegal demonstration.

Hindraf chief P Waythamoorthy called Malaysiakini from London, saying that the splinter group did not represent Hindraf and the prayer ceremony was not sanctioned by the Indian rights group.

Seeking divine intervention

Bonfire organisers VK Regu had told reporters earlier that the event was organised by the Makkal Sakhti movement, which is sometimes used interchangeably with Hindraf, in collaboration with an NGO.

"We want to seek divine intervention to secure the release of the five Hindraf leaders detained under the Internal Security Act," he said, adding that the event was also to urge Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat to fulfil Hindraf's 18-point memorandum on Indian affairs submitted to Abdullah last year.

hindraf penang protest 230808 templeShortly after, Regu was confronted by the 10 Hindraf activists and a shouting match erupted between the two groups before the protest began.

The Hindraf activist claimed that the bonfire organisers were out to confuse Indian voters in Permatang Pauh by engaging Abdullah at the event.

The demonstration began immediately after Abdullah left the event with protesters shouting "reformasi" and "long live Anwar" before they were dispersed by the police.