

BN backbenchers : Police training needs revamp
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The Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club (BBC) today expressed its concern over the custodial death involving Kugan Ananthan and suggested several measures to overcome such incidents in the future.

The club, through a statement issued by its chairperson Tiong King Sing, also said it was worried by the political manipulation of the issue by the opposition to gain mileage from the people.

"We, as responsible politicians, should work towards calming the emotional setting of the community rather than stirring the racial issues to further aggravate the wound," said Tiong in the statement.

He added that all politicians should focus on providing constructive criticisms or some solutions, instead of blatantly condemning the government and the police force.

And the club proposed several revamps to bring an end to custodial death, including the review of the police selection process to ensure only truly qualified persons are appointed to join the police force and the discarding of old practices of using force to extract information during interrogation.

On the selection process, Tiong said that the process must be reviewed to reflect quality in qualification and capability to serve the nation.

"Merely churning out numbers to reflect fulfilment of quantity in the police force will not give us a great team," he said.

He added that all undergraduates in police academy should not be allowed to graduate automatically but only the qualified ones must be allowed to graduate.

"During undergraduate studies, the candidate must be tested on a comprehensive set of modules in pertinent areas of law, homicide, human rights and social skills."

Discard old practices

Tiong, the member of parliament for Bintulu, also stressed that the police force must discard old practices of using force to extract information during interrogation.

He said that the police personnel must be exposed to new methods of interrogation without force with the help of foreign experts.

He suggested that the police investigation team attend ongoing courses and training to update and upgrade themselves to latest methods of investigation.

"The CID team must be specifically handpicked from only those thoroughly qualified based on merits and not on cronyism and favouritism," he said.

Tiong also said that the police officers who are assigned to serve in criminal department

must be trained by experts in criminology, forensic and homicide to equip themselves with the adequate expertise to carry out their duties.

He said that the Kugan case amplified the fact that there still exist some bad apples in the police force.

However, he added, the inhuman acts of selected few from the police force should not be seen as reflecting the attitude of the entire police force.

The BBC chairperson also urged the Indian community not to react emotionally and not to believe rumours that's being circulated through the short messaging services (SMSes).

"I will discuss this matter with the members of BBC and shall do our best as parliamentarians to protect the interests of all the communities including the Indians," he said.

Kugan was arrested on Jan 15 in connection with several car theft cases. He died at the Taipan police station five days later. He was buried on Wednesday.

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