

Police Must Act Against Thugs
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By Chong Sin Woon

The attack by the 50~70 assailants against the university students camping out at Dataran Merdeka who are calling for the abolition of the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loans warrants unreserved condemnation. There is no room for mob rule in Malaysia.

Thus, I strongly urge the Royal Malaysian Police to take action against the perpetrators that morning who used violence against the students, including female undergraduates. Thuggery and mob rule must not be allowed ascendancy over the rule of law.

The MCA Youth Education Bureau also hopes that the Opposition now realises that in their feverish calls to Malaysians to participate in one demonstration after another be it in Malaysia or globally, reactions from their detractors may arise. Ultimately, there are victims caught in between, and in this case, the students with the tents.

While I do not agree to the students occupying Dataran Merdeka nor the purpose for them to do so, I recognise that as youths, they are imbued with idealism and are sending a message to the higher authorities, although I do not agree to the method.

However, our Bureau maintains that the undergraduates, as young impressionable idealists, too should be accorded equal protection of the law. They should not be subjected to any form of harassment or intimidation, especially from fellow civilians whose hoodlum-like bullying must be dealt with by law enforcers.

Do not be misled by Pakatan Rakyat's political rhetoric

I implore the Dataran Merdeka occupiers not to be influenced by PKR's ketua umum ala Anwar Ibrahim's rhetoric which are populist in and mischief in content. While he and his other Pakatan Rakyat cohorts extol scrapping the PTPTN loans which translates to writing off RM43.6bil worth in loans, this populist announcement is merely aimed at instigating aspiration-charged impressionable youths against the Barisan Nasional government.

Pakatan's selfish announcement if ever enforced, will also deprive many youths, especially from rural areas as well as urban poor, an opportunity at tertiary education be it at either public or private institutes of higher learning. Young adults will then have a chance at enhancing their career prospects thereby halting the vicious cycle of poverty which would have haunted their forefathers before who did not have the financial access and mobility to higher education or skills certification. Compared to 1998, the proportion of youths who received tertiary education was below 15% but this percentage has grown to 45% recently.

Loans come with responsibilities

What message is the Opposition sending out to the students when they exhort axing the loans? Taking a loan entails responsibility and borrowers are expected to repay their loans when they find employment. Is Pakatan teaching borrowers to default on their loans?

Most adults in the working world will eventually take a car loan, home loan, personal or even an SME start-up loan. Are Anwar and other Pakatan honchos inculcating in undergraduates that they can simply apply and receive any loan from any legitimate licenced financial institution, and then walk away without servicing the loans? If so, this is a very irresponsible lesson and regressive move for Malaysia for Opposition parties to impart to youths.

CHONG SIN WOON is MCA Youth Education Bureau chairman

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