

DAP Regrets Police Inaction During Attack
MalaysianMirror.com
20 April 2012
By Lim Guan Eng

At around 2.45am yesterday morning, a bunch of thugs descended upon the group of university students peacefully assembling at Dataran Merdeka and assaulted them, resulting in one student ending up in hospital. Besides physically roughing the students up, the thugs also destroyed the tents that the students were camping in.

The group of student activists had been camping peacefully at Dataran Merdeka for 6 days now, in an attempt to exercise their democratic rights to protest against what they claim to be high interest rates and administrative charges imposed by the national educational loan fund (PTPTN).

The barbaric use of violence against peacefully assembling students has drawn immediate condemnation from all quarters, including human rights groups and Malaysians at large. Since when have thuggery and gangsterism become part of our culture? It is indeed a sad day when our children who are merely trying to express their democratic rights are victimised in such an ugly and violent manner.

Worse, reports have come in stating that policemen had been on duty in the area but had not intervened until the student leaders pleaded for help. And although they finally quelled the violent attacks, it was too little too late and most of the thugs had already left. In the end, only one person was apprehended.

When Kuala Lumpur Police Chief Mohamad Salleh was asked why only one out of a whole mob of attackers was nabbed, despite there being eyewitness videos to identify other attackers, he responded that "it was early in the morning and we could not differentiate the attackers from those already there."

This police inaction is similar to the incident at Speaker's Corner in Esplanade in Penang on 26 February when UMNO and Perkasa members behaved like thugs, violently attacking and injuring 2 reporters during an anti-Lynas rally. One of the reporters had to endure 8 stitches to close his injury. The policemen present just stood by and did not act to stop or arrest those involved in the barbaric attacks of UMNO and Perkasa members attacking peaceful anti-Lynas demonstrators and physically force the anti-Lynas demonstrators to leave. Up to now not a single person has been arrested by Penang police.

Regretfully, the police inaction were also seen in Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur by dragging their feet once again and not taking pro-active measures against what can only be described as a politically-motivated hate crime. To make matters worse, no UMNO Minister has spoken out to condemn the atrocious incident. Home Minister Hishamuddin Hussein merely downplayed the incident and even claimed that it could be a deliberate attempt to stir up emotions.

Worse is the arrogant and inexcusable response by Higher Education Minister Khaled Nordin, who as the minister responsible for universities and university students should have been protecting them instead of condoning such barbaric attacks. Khaled had tweeted: "No one asked them to camp out at Dataran Merdeka. When something happens, don't go asking for sympathy."

Khaled's remarks in telling the hapless students not to "go asking for sympathy" when they had just been beaten up and abused for merely exercising their basic human and democratic rights is nothing short of sheer arrogance and a statement that is unbecoming of a minister.

DAP strongly condemns this incident as it is not only an attack on the sacred principles of human rights but also a blatant affront to Malaysian culture and values. DAP regrets police inaction during the barbaric attacks university students exercising their rights by peacefully assembling at Dataran Merdeka and shameful refusal by UMNO Ministers to condemn these attacks.

LIM GUAN ENG

(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)

Copyright © 2012 www.malaysianmirror.com
<http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/6-nation/57421>