

**DAP slams cops, ministers for inaction over Dataran attack**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Lisa J. Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 20 — DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng today condemned police authorities and Umno ministers for the inaction over yesterday's pre-dawn assault on student activists at Dataran Merdeka.

"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," Lim said today in a press statement.

"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," he added.

Lim said to make matters worse, no Umno ministers have spoken out against the incident, adding that Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein had sought to downplay the incident a "a deliberate attempt to stir up emotions".

"Worse is the arrogant and inexcusable response by Higher Education Minister Datuk Khaled Nordin, who, as the minister responsible for universities and university students, should have been protecting them instead of condoning such barbaric attacks," he said, referring to Khaled's response to the incident posted on Twitter.

Yesterday, Khaled had tweeted: "No one asked them to camp out at Dataran Merdeka. When something happens, don't go asking for sympathy."

"(His) 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," Lim said.

"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."

The group of student activists have been camping out in tents, in shifts, since last Saturday after hundreds of them marched across the city's capital to lobby for free tertiary education, after being disenchanted by pay-back terms and conditions over the government's higher education loan scheme.

Yesterday morning, the group said they were attacked by a mob of about 60 to 70 unidentified assailants garbed in black who demanded that they return home.

A nearly five-minute long video of the assault, which was uploaded on YouTube, showed a group of young men dressed in printed black T-shirts rushing towards another gathering of men, including those dressed in the striking yellow Bersih T-shirts, and attempting to kick at them.

The video did not capture any of the alleged assault, but contained sounds of a commotion in the background. Most of the words are undecipherable, but some are clearly enunciated, such as some men's voices yelling "Bodoh!" (Stupid) and "Assalamualaikum" repeatedly.

Several figures, including those dressed in police uniform, were seen trying to break up the melee and telling onlookers to disperse.

The video, titled "Mob of 40 attacking students at Dataran Merdeka" uploaded on Youtube carried a description lifted from a Facebook message stated "the Government might take action against them tonight. My assistance managed to capture some video although he himself was attacked by 4 to 5 of them [sic]."

The attack drew an immediate condemnation by human rights group Suaram, who noted that the incident was not the first time violence was used to disrupt peaceful demonstrations.

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