

Mukhriz: Opposition Leaders Intentionally Incite Violence During Saturday's Rally
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir has lashed out at organisers of last Saturday's demonstration and opposition leaders for intentionally inciting public hatred that led to violence, and that they should be held responsible for it.

The Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister said it was no use for them to act "naive and innocent" and play the blame game now, as they had caused the turmoil.

"As expected, the rally turned out to be out of control. I feel that they had done it intentionally to provoke our security forces, who were taking measures to control the situation.

"(Datuk Seri) Anwar Ibrahim and Azmin Ali particularly incited the demonstrators into acting like hooligans," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Mukhriz said he was deeply disappointed and angered by the violence, adding that the opposition had purposely taken advantage of the government's liberty to stage the violence and to turn Dataran Merdeka into Egypt's Tahrir Square.

The opposition, he said, intended to copycat the uprising in the Arab countries, famously known as the "Arab Spring" early last year, which saw Arab leaders including in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya ousted by the people.

He said Saturday's unruly demonstration which was widely covered by the international media, had tarnished the country's image and it was now left to the government to do the damage control.

"It appears that all the good work done by the government including attracting foreign investments to our country, is somewhat jeopardised now," he added.

In BANTING, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan has called on the police to expedite the investigation into the violent rally to bring those responsible to book.

He said the video on the rioting should be screened to the public to prove that the organisers had failed to hold a peaceful demonstration for two hours as promised.

Ahmad, who is also Umno information chief, was speaking to reporters after a gathering with Kuala Langat Umno division and Sijangkang branch leaders.

He said the violent rally was a loss to the country as some business operations and services to the public such as taxi and bus services were disrupted, as well as causing fear to foreign tourists.

Ahmad said the incident would also be manipulated by the foreign media who would not give an accurate picture of the country which was always peaceful all year round, thus tarnishing Malaysia's image.

"We are not afraid of differing views as not everyone thinks alike. But what we are concerned about is the mob mentality during such a rally, creating pandemonium and chaos.

"That is why the government allows peaceful public gatherings be held at controllable venues such as the stadiums, but the four stadiums offered by the government were rejected by the rally organisers who insisted on demonstrating at Dataran Merdeka," he said.

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