

PKR leader remanded over suspicion of breaching Dataran Merdeka barricades
The Malaysian Insider
May 01, 2012
By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, May 1 — A Negeri Sembilan PKR leader has been remanded for three days following his arrest last night, believed to be on suspicion that he had been the first to breach the police barricades surrounding Dataran Merdeka on Saturday.

PKR vice-president N. Surendran told The Malaysian Insider that Rasah PKR deputy chief R. Thangam was arrested at his home in Seremban last night by a team of some 20 officers.

He said magistrate Azmil Muntapha Abas had agreed to grant a three-day remand order this afternoon, instead of the seven days applied by the police, on grounds that the matter was "in public interest".

"This was after he heard my arguments... I objected because there was no basis for Thangam's arrest," he said, when contacted shortly after emerging from the remand hearing.

Surendran said Thangam is being investigated under Section 440 of the Penal Code.

Section 440(a) states: "Whoever commits mischief while taking part in an unlawful assembly or in a riot shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to a fine".

Surendran condemned Thangam's arrest, insisting that the move was clearly a "propaganda attempt" to portray Pakatan Rakyat (PR) as the aggressors in Bersih 3.0, which had resulted in violence at about 3pm last Saturday,

He pointed out that despite numerous video evidence showing the police attacking protesters and even newsmen, no action has been taken against them.

"No action has been taken against those seen assaulting and arresting journalists," he said.

Surendran however admitted that he was not aware if Thangam had indeed been the first to breach the barricades surrounding Dataran Merdeka, which was believed to have sparked off the ensuing violence.

Dataran Merdeka had been cordoned off to protesters on Saturday following a court order obtained by police to bar any individual from staging the protest within the iconic square.

But when the barriers were first breached, riot police immediately took up their offensive stance and began firing tear gas canisters and water cannons to disperse protesters, even past Dataran Merdeka.

"I do not know if Thangam was at all involved but from the remand hearing just now, it was

clear they have no evidence against him.

"He committed no assault or criminal act. He is innocent and his arrest was baseless," said Surendran.

He urged the Inspector-General of Police to call for Thangam's immediate release.

Reports have pointed to speculation that an Indian man, believed to be a Negeri Sembilan PKR leader, was the first to breach the police barricades, following confusion over orders to do so allegedly made by PKR's two top leaders Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Azmin Ali.

But both men have vehemently denied the claims.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pkr-leader-remanded-over-suspicion-of-breaching-dataran-merdeka-barricades/>