

Spend more to fight crime, DAP tells Putrajaya
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, July 2 — The DAP today urged Putrajaya to immediately invest more funds in public safety, saying Friday's break-in at Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik's house in the capital was another clear indication of a rising crime rate.

Party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng told the police not to be distracted by "political directives" to deal with opposition lawmakers or "peaceful" demonstrators, and instead focus on their core duty of fighting criminals.

"Prevention is always better than cure," he pointed out. "DAP urges the federal government to invest funds in public safety through using technology by installing CCTVs, supporting active community policing by voluntary patrol groups and making the police presence felt at criminal hotspots."

According to media reports, the house of Abdul Rahim, the former chief minister of Malacca, was broken into last Friday. The robbers successfully carted away cash and a pistol.

Lim pointed out that losing a pistol to criminals places the public at even greater risk as the weapon would likely be later used to commit even more dangerous crimes.

He placed blame squarely on Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, who recently brushed off the recent spate of crimes in the Klang Valley as isolated cases, calling the minister "lazy" for merely relying on statistics to prove his reasoning.

"If VIPs are also not safe, how can ordinary members of the public be safe? Datuk Seri Hishammuddin's indifferent dismissal of the media reports of crime is clearly irresponsible as he is insensitive not only to the suffering endured by victims but also to the real concern amongst the public about crime," he said.

Lim reminded Hishammuddin that statistics and figures do not take into account the human dimension of the loss or injury suffered because of criminals.

He stressed that although data may show that the crime index has fallen, it is more important to measure if an individual feels safe in public.

"Telling that one is safe just because the crime index has fallen is irrelevant when, now, a woman does not feel safe in the Klang Valley just going into the car park," he said.

"Hishammuddin should retract his insensitive remarks and give his full attention to the worsening crime situation before it develops into a full blown crisis," the Bagan MP added.

Pemandu, the government's efficiency unit, and the home ministry have claimed that crime dropped by 11 per cent last year and street crime by 40 per cent since the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) was put in place two years ago, despite a recent spate of high-profile kidnappings and assaults.

These cases include a bloody assault on Bersih steering committee member Wong Chin Huat while he was jogging in Petaling Jaya, and the abduction of teacher Teoh Soo Kim, 51, who was left fighting for her life after suffering severe head injuries.

A 12-year-old in Ipoh and a woman in her 20s in Mutiara Damansara, Petaling Jaya, had also recently narrowly escaped being abducted in the past month — all episodes that followed after the high-profile kidnapping of 12-year-old Dutch national Nayati Moodliar, which had gained international media coverage.

These cases have led to questions over Pemandu's claim that the country's crime rate has dropped.

Authorities have stuck to the statistics and Datuk Seri Idris Jala, who is Pemandu chief executive, had recently even called on the media to play its role in fighting crime and help arrest the "doom and gloom" by reporting on solved cases and not sensationalising crime by repeatedly reporting the same news.

"They should work closely with the police on communicating the cases that they have successfully solved. Sometimes, we need to arrest the doom and gloom by also focusing on the positives.

"If the statistics are not convincing, perhaps then we should try to dwell into how the police were able to bring the crime rates down in a specific area, for example, one of the hotspots," he was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

But Selangor's deputy police chief Datuk A. Thaveegan appeared on Saturday to acknowledge a spike in crime in the state when he suggested that the repeal of the Emergency Ordinance (EO) may have caused the surge, saying that a number of released suspects may have returned to their past habits instead of reforming.

Last September, the federal government repealed the controversial EO, a security law introduced after the 1969 race riots that allowed the authorities to detain a person without trial for up to two years, similar to the much-criticised Internal Security Act (ISA).

It was usually used on hardcore gangsters but had also been used on underage children who were held in the same detention facilities for adults.

"But we see there is a rise in crime (recently) because they've been in (detention) for too long, they need 'exercise', so they come out and immediately they carry out their activities," Thaveegan, was reported as saying by news portal Malaysiakini.

He was earlier reported saying the government has released the EO detainees for a second chance, but were now not certain if they had returned "to the right path".

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