

**DAP: Punishing teens will torch BN's non-Malay support**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 — Lim Guan Eng today suggested that Barisan Nasional's (BN) harsh treatment of those responsible for last week's Merdeka Day misadventures despite a failure to address similar transgressions by hardliners in Umno and Perkasa will alienate its non-Malay support.

The DAP secretary-general said the action will also serve to highlight the government's apparent bias after having ignored unruly behaviour displayed previously by Malay right wingers.

Lim pointed out that unlike the political leaders, the youths who mooned over or trampled on photographs of the country's leaders and raised a pre-independence flag during last week's Merdeka Day celebrations had not committed the acts with malicious intent.

"But this Perkasa... they are extremists. These youths, they just want to have fun, they do not know what they are doing.

"But others, they have done these three, four times. Not only stepping and burning photographs but even performing Hindu funeral rites for me. This is not just an insult to the Hindus but also to the Muslims," he said in a press conference in Penang earlier today.

The Bagan MP pointed out that unlike the young mischief makers, several of whom have apologised for their actions over the week, those from Perkasa and other pro-Umno supporters have yet to come forward to do the same.

Despite this, Lim said the authorities appeared overly determined to throw the book at the youths, even opening a probe against them under the Sedition Act, a law that the government has promised it will repeal soon.

He urged the government to have a "big heart" and accept the apologies offered by the two teenagers over the picture-stomping incident, saying it was punishment enough their actions were heavily publicised.

In a separate statement here, DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang suggested the same, and urged a Cheras-based private college to reverse its decision to expel one of the teenagers, the 19-year old boy from Batu Pahat.

"This incident just shows that Perkasa is Umno and Umno is Perkasa. Clearly, they do not need the non-Malay votes," Guan Eng said.

"The way they behave... BN does not need the non-Malay votes, they do not want the non-Malay votes and I think this message has been passed throughout Malaysia."

Other opposition politicians have railed against the authorities for the speed with which they have reprimanded the youths for the incident, noting a failure to do the same against

pro-Umno, pro-BN and Perkasa activists who previously committed the comparable offences.

Malay right wing group Perkasa had in May this year organised a mock funeral for Lim.

The group's leaders, as well as other pro-Umno activists have also held numerous protests where the photographs of prominent Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders and civil society activists like Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan were trampled on or even torched.

Shortly after the April 28 Bersih rally in the city, a group of army veterans had also performed butt exercises outside Ambiga's home.

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