

## **Three Media Personnel Roughed Up by Anti-GST Protesters**

**Bernama**

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KUALA LUMPUR, May 1 (Bernama) -- Three members of the media who were covering a gathering protesting against the Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the Dataran Merdeka today, claimed they were roughed up by some protestors.

In the incident which occurred when the gathering was beginning to disperse about 4.30pm, two members of the media were punched and kicked. Another was hit by a piece of wood hurled in his direction.

Xinhua News Agency cameraman Mohd Zul Iskanda Mohd Hanafiah, who was kicked and also struck by a piece of wood, told Bernama he and several members of the media were provoked by a group of youths dressed in black and whose faces were wrapped in cloth.

"We did not do anything at all, we were recording their antics when they suddenly pushed us. I was kicked twice in the abdomen.

"Luckily, my camera was not damaged, only the lens cap fell off," he said.

Meanwhile, Focus Malaysia photographer Sharil Amin Abdul Rahim claimed he was punched and kicked, while Malaysian Reserve photographer Hafzi Mohamad was hit by a wooden projectile.

Malaysia Press Photographers Association (MPPA) secretary Mohammad Naim Firdaus Abdul Aziz in a statement here said MPPA would lodge a police report on the incident.

He said MPPA viewed seriously the incident which should not have happened because the gathering was approved by the authorities.

He also rapped the action of some of the participants of the gathering who allegedly attacked the media and lit flares at the Dataran Merdeka.

Meanwhile, Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia (SAMM), a non governmental organisation that organised the rally denied any links with a group of youth, known as Anarki Group, who had allegedly attacked members of the media at the rally today.

SAMM founder Badrul Hisham Shaharin or Chegubard as he is known said the group who were also wearing black outfits were not members of SAMM.

"These youths possessed a high level of dedication to protest but we regret their action to attack members of the media and I would like to apologize for their action," he told reporters here today.

When asked what form of precaution would SAMM take to avoid a similar incident, Badrul Hisham said: "I am not sure how to handle the situation if it happens again," he said.

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