

**We were assaulted at GST protest, say DAP duo**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**March 24, 2015**  
**By Eileen Ng**

Two DAP federal lawmakers said they were assaulted by the police at yesterday's protest against the goods and services tax (GST) without any provocation.

Bukit Mertajam MP Steven Sim and Stampin MP Julian Tan Kok Ping said they were with the crowd that had gathered outside the Kelana Jaya police station after police had detained scores of people, including two other lawmakers, and denied the detainees legal representation.

They said the crowd was peaceful, chanting and singing songs and added that the plainclothes policemen who were outside the station began agitating the mainly youthful crowd.

"We tried to stand between the crowd and the police and that's when I was hit by a baton on my left thigh.

"I shouted that I am an MP but they ignored me," Sim said at the Parliament lobby today, adding that he woke up this morning with bruises and his smartphone was also damaged.

In recounting his experience, Tan said he was kicked by someone he believed to be a plainclothes policeman.

"I told him I am a Yang Berhormat, an MP but in return, I got more kicks," he said and later showed media photographers the bruises on the left upper arm.

Both Sim and Tan, together with another DAP member Hew Kuan Yau, who also claimed he was beaten up by the police at the rally, will lodge police reports against the force for assault and battery.

"These are criminal offences and we will follow up with legal action.

"We can take civil action for assault and battery," said party legal adviser Ramkarpal Singh.

He said police were supposed to be enforcing laws and ensuring the security and safety of citizens.

"These MPs were there peacefully. There was absolutely no reason or justification to assault them," he said and urged the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar to "wake up" and handle the matter fairly.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said yesterday's incident marked the IGP's height of contempt for Parliament and urged action against those in the force who are responsible for manhandling the protesters and MPs.

"The IGP should send all policemen to a human rights sensitisation course. The protesters are clearly no threat to security and should be handled in a manner that reflects respect for human rights.

"Clearly, the police do not respect human rights," he said and urged the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) to organise such courses for police.

The GST protest yesterday jointly organised by the Parti Sosialis Malaysia and Gabungan Bantah GST, a coalition of activists opposed to the consumption tax, saw at least 80 people being detained by the police.

Among those picked up were PSM Sungai Siput MP Michael Jeyakumar Devaraj, PKR's Badrul Hisham Shahrin and PAS MP Dr Hatta Ramli. Police have obtained remand for 25 protesters.

The primary objective of the rally was to get the Customs Department to answer some 100 questions on the GST.

Among the questions were will there be enforcement to ensure unscrupulous traders do not take advantage of the tax to fleece consumers and if computers for students were subjected to GST.

The GST will replace the existing sales and services tax system in April. The broad-based 6% GST tax will be levied on almost everything except a list of essential goods.

Putrajaya had said the GST was part of its efforts to reform the tax system, where only about 1.7 million out of 12 million workers pay income tax. – March 24, 2015.

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