

Surau scuffle: Most Malaysians still united, insists Khalid

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Amanah communications director says assault in front of surau in Johor is not reflective of how the majority of Malaysians behave.

PETALING JAYA: Amanah communications director Khalid Samad has warned Deputy Home Minister Nur Jazlan Mohamed against painting all Malaysians with the same brush following the assault and vandalising that occurred in front of a surau in Taman Austin Perdana, Johor after Friday prayers last week.

Khalid was responding to a report in The Star Online which quoted Nur Jazlan as saying that “the incident shows how fragile the situation (unity) is in the country.”

Khalid, however, had a rather different take on the incident and said what happened in Johor was not reflective of how the majority of Malaysians behaved.

“Malaysians are generally very much against the idea of any form of interracial violence under whatever circumstances,” he told FMT.

“If you look at the video, even though there were a few people attacking the driver, there were also quite a number of people who were trying to calm the situation down.”

A video of the incident, that has gone viral, showed a man in a white Toyota Camry incessantly honking because his vehicle was blocked by other cars parked outside the surau.

However, looking somewhat enraged themselves, a group of men emerged from the surau to confront the driver. Some repeatedly hit and kicked his vehicle as another was seen hitting him repeatedly with a red traffic cone as others called for calm.

Four men were later arrested and are being investigated for rioting under Section 147 of the Penal Code.

“I don’t think everyone who finds roads to be blocked will act in the same manner as that one car (driver) and I don’t think that if there was someone acting in that manner, that everyone would resort to violence (as a reaction),” Khalid said.

He also said that instead of “making sweeping statements” regarding the incident, what should be considered was how to overcome similar situations from recurring.

“Identify the issues. One of the main issues is that Muslims who go for Friday prayers need to be more considerate of the general public.

“We are not staying in a kampung. If we are staying in a kampung and we know that everyone is in the mosque then it doesn’t matter if you block the road, but if you’re staying in the town you have to be more responsible and considerate.

“Islam teaches its adherents to be considerate and whatever good you get for going to pray is neutralised by your inconsiderate attitude which had caused inconvenience to your fellow man.”

Earlier, Perlis mufti Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin also called on Muslims to respect the rights of others who use certain roads in the vicinity of mosques and surau.

He took to his Facebook page to say that this was important as everybody had the right to move around freely in public spaces in accordance with the law.

However, he also clarified that his message was not connected in any way to what occurred in Johor yesterday.

Khalid meanwhile said the person in the car should also have been more patient.

“It was also wrong for the car driver to honk continuously knowing full well people were in the surau praying.

“There were one or two causing the inconvenience but you (the driver) responded by inconveniencing all who were in the surau.”

Khalid stressed, however, that two wrongs did not make a right and the men’s reaction to the driver was equally inexcusable.

“They responded by beating him up and taking the law into their own hands. The reaction should have been more controlled and responsible knowing that the man was upset by the jam.”

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