

Malaysia: Private training institute busts student union, blames PSM

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Editor's note: An earlier version of this article referred to AATC as "Advanced Aeronautics Training Centre". This has been corrected to "Allied Aeronautics Training Centre". The former has no dispute with regard to the Skills Development Fund Corporation loans. Malaysiakini apologises for the error.

Allied Aeronautics Training Centre (AATC) today claimed that PSM central committee member and activist Sharan Raj had incited its students that culminated in arrests.

This was amid a dispute between the students and the training centre over the inability to qualify for government loans.

In a statement released by law firm Raj & Sach on behalf of AATC, it said the protest in front of its complex in Petaling Jaya this afternoon came after the training centre expelled two students who had led an "illegal union".

The law firm said AATC's management was at all times open to negotiation and acceded to the students' demands for four representatives to be allowed on campus grounds for negotiations.

However, the law firm said AATC only wanted to negotiate with current students but the group was insistent that the two expelled students negotiate on their behalf.

"Members of the Special Branch of the Malaysian police attempted to convince them numerous times to send four current student representatives but to no avail.

"Sharan Raj continued to politicise the situation and incited the students to march right up to the entrance of AATC whilst chanting slogans.

"This culminated in the police officers attempting to arrest Sharan Raj. Upon this attempt, the two ex-students and a number of other students became aggressive and attempted to hold Sharan Raj back, aggressively pushing the police officers whilst resisting arrest," it said.

Earlier today, Petaling Jaya deputy police chief Ku Mashariman Ku Mahmood confirmed that Sharan and seven students [were arrested](#) for obstructing public servants in discharging their public functions.

The protesters had claimed that AATC promised the students a government loan for their studies through the Skills Development Fund Corporation under the Human Resources Ministry but broke their promise and instead pushed them to take personal loans from a private bank.

The disgruntlement led to the formation of a union to champion their cause, which the AATC claimed was illegal and culminated with the expulsion of two of the student union's leaders.

The law firm defended AATC's action against the two students.

"Not only were the students unable to clear their dues, but they had also refused to commit to any student loan/financial assistance that was provided for by AATC and were also unable to arrange any independent financial assistance by themselves.

"To make matters worse, despite AATC's continued attempts to assist these students, they nonetheless proceeded to create an illegal student union, organising a prior protest against AATC for purportedly having failed to provide them assistance in obtaining loans, particularly government loans which were no longer available to students of AATC through no fault of AATC," it said.

It added that AATC is a privately-run training centre certified by the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia and not a university or college that fell under the Malaysian Qualification Agency under the Education Ministry.

"As such, the students at AATC are bound by the in-house rules of AATC and cannot unionise and/or create a student body without AATC's prior approval.

"However, the student union and the protest/assembly that was held was done without prior registration with the Registrar of Societies and the approval of the police.

"As such, the two students heading this illegal union and protest were expelled from AATC," it said.

The law firm disputed PSM's claim that the training centre had refused to negotiate.

"AATC states that it had at all material times maintained a civil approach to the present dispute.

"It was fully entitled under the law to expel the two students for the clear breach of their agreements with AATC," it said.

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