

Rally in Yogyakarta demands dismissal and prosecution of 'smackdown' police officer

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Yogyakarta — Scores of protesters from various civil society groups held a demonstration in front of the Yogyakarta provincial regional police headquarters in Sleman on Friday October 15.

The demonstrators were demanding that a police officer who slammed Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Islamic State University (UIN SMH) student Muhammad Fariz to the ground during a rally in Tangerang, West Java, be dismissed and prosecuted under the law.

The protesters, who began arriving at the location at around 3am, were made up of students from the Gajah Mada University (UGM), UIN, the Amikom University Yogyakarta, the Papua Student Alliance and civil society organisations.

They brought a number of banners to the demonstration, one of which had the message "The police are the repressors of democracy #RIP#FightFascism". They also sung a song criticising the police.

"Where oh where is the 2nd principle [of the state ideology of Pancasila, social justice]. The 2nd principle has been trampled on by the police. They say they protect, they say they serve. But in fact it's trampled on by the police", reverberated the protesters' song.

Action coordinator Rizaldi said that the protest was organised spontaneously in response to the brutal actions by police against Muhammad Fariz who was taking part in a rally in front of the Tangerang regent's office on Wednesday October 13.

"The aim is to issue a warning [to police] not to continually act repressively. Because this is just one of a series of repressive acts by police which have occurred over the last few years", said Rizaldi at the location.

Quoting from a report by Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras), Rizaldi said that there had been around 800 incident of police repression against civilians which did not follow procedures.

"The demand in relation to the incident in Tangerang is dismiss and prosecute the perpetrator of violence against Fariz", he asserted.

He added that an apology by the officer concerned is not enough and that cases of police violence against civilians have been accumulating.

"An apology is not enough, saying sorry, then Fariz says it was nothing at all, we think this isn't enough. Because we see that there is something wrong police education at the moment, related to how they deal with civilians", he said.

“Our clear position is demanding that the police office be dismissed as a lesson for other police officers so they are not arrogant towards civilians”, he added.

The protesters said that police are capable of being more humane although they are certain that this action alone will not be enough to awaken the police’s conscious.

“We think that there will be follow up actions to continue to remind people about their repressive actions which obstruct advances in social prosperity”, he said.

As of late afternoon the demonstrators were still at the Yogyakarta police headquarters. The action itself proceeded without incident and was watched over by police who directed traffic.

Fariz was a victim of police brutality when a rally in Tangerang was broken up by police. In a video which has been circulating on social media, Fariz is seen being thrown to the ground or “smackdowned” by a police officer with the initials NP.

The police only responded after the video when viral with police Brigadier NP making a public apology at the Tangerang municipal police headquarters.

Although he was initially reported as being well, Fariz is currently being treated in hospital for injuries to his neck and head. (kum/pmg)

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