

# VENDOR: I SOLD ONLY BALLOONS, NOT DRUGS

Man upset over allegations he had long criminal record, lodges report

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**T**HE balloon vendor who sustained injuries in a with Kuala Lumpur City Hall enforcement officers broke down in tears as he commented on claims of his criminal record for 13 offences.

"I only sold balloons, not drugs. If I am a former convict, does it mean I can be beaten, kicked, choked and oppressed?" Muhammad Zaimmudin Azlan told a press conference.

Zaimmudin, a full-time golf caddy, said he decided to sell balloons to supplement his income ahead of Aidilfitri and to fund his hernia operation scheduled for April 18.

"Am I not allowed to earn an income because of my past? Is my past a licence for anyone to beat me up?"

"If I am poor and have a past, can City Hall treat me like dirt?" Zaimmudin said after lodging a report at the Dang Wangi police headquarters.

He was accompanied by his mother, Hasnah Mat Isa, lawyer Muhammad Rafique Rashid Ali and doctor Dr Mohd Hafidz Rizal Amran.

Zaimmudin also said he would take legal action to protect himself and his family's dignity over the incident.



*Vendor Muhammad Zaimmudin Azlan at a press conference after lodging a report at the Dang Wangi police headquarters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him is his mother, Hasnah Mat Isa. NSTP PIC*

BY ASWADI ALIAS

He added that he hoped those who condemned him never experience what he went through.

"It is not easy being poor... I will fight this.

"To the authorities, please uphold integrity and act according to the law. I was only trying to earn a living for myself and my family. We wanted to celebrate Hari Raya like everyone else."

Asked about the claims of his criminal past which were published in news reports quoting sources, Zaimmudin referred the question to Rafique.

Rafique said that all the reports on the matter quoted an anonymous source.

"Who released this information? Because as soon as it came out, all the media picked up the same wording, as if there was a deliberate release of information to tarnish Zaimmudin and his family's reputation."

He said no past record justified his client's treatment and that such a record was usually used in court by the prosecution to highlight that a person hadn't learnt from their mistakes.

On the report he lodged yesterday, Zaimmudin alleged that enforcement officers in plainclothes approached him without their authority cards and seized his balloons.

On Friday, it was reported that two of three investigation papers opened in connection with the incident in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman have been referred to the Attorney-General's Chambers.

City Hall has said Zaimmudin acted when told to leave the area after repeated warnings. It has since placed three enforcement officers involved in the brawl on temporary leave pending investigations.