

27/10/1998

Hishamuddin Rais released along with several others

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Former student activist Hishamuddin Rais, who was among the 268 people arrested during violent clashes between police and demonstrators in Kampung Baru last Saturday, was released from police custody today.

City police chief Datuk Kamaruddin Ali confirmed that Hishamuddin was released together with several others.

However, he was unable to say how many others had been released together with Hishamuddin.

Earlier, at a Press conference, Hishamuddin claimed that 45 other people were released by a magistrate when it was decided there was no case against them.

He denied that he had led or was actively taking part in illegal demonstrations in the city.

"I would like to clarify that I was not involved or was leading any demonstration, protests or movement. I am not a member of any political party, non-governmental organisation or any movement," added Hishamuddin who was released from police custody about 1am.

He said he was arrested by police while he was waiting for a friend at the Pertama Complex about 3.45pm.

Hishamuddin added that he had arranged to meet his friend there as they were scheduled to go to Port Dickson as both were selected to be on the jury for a TV3 programme.

Hishamuddin, who described himself as a filmmaker, writer and freelance photographer, said he was not involved in any activity which could threaten the nation's security.

On his presence at several illegal demonstrations in the city, Hishamuddin claimed he was there because he wanted to see and record the gatherings which he claimed were a "historic event."

"I always carry a camera with me.... I feel I must take pictures (of the illegal assemblies) for the benefit of the future generation," he said, adding that he would continue with the practice despite the arrest.

Hishamuddin said he hoped his statements would clear up any misconception people had about him following his arrest, adding that although he believed that a peaceful demonstration was acceptable in a democratic society, he was totally against violence.

Between 1972 and 1974, Hishamuddin was responsible for organising and actively taking part in a number of illegal demonstrations.

He fled the country in 1975 while awaiting trial and only returned in 1994 after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Home Minister, approved his unconditional return.

Hishamuddin graduated from the Film School of the Polytechnic of Central London, now the University of Westminster, while in London.

His first movie, *Dari Jemapoh ke Manchester*, is scheduled for screening in December.

(END)