

Findings based on evidence, says Suhakam

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PETALING JAYA: The findings of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) on the gathering at the Kesas Highway last November are based on facts and evidence, said commissioner Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin.

"We keep our minds open and not for a moment are we dependant on the Western way of thinking.

"It is a report of an open enquiry based on facts produced by witnesses. We have evidence to support our findings.

"I am quite confident that we arrived at our conclusion without being influenced by the West," he said.

Anuar was responding to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's comment that the Suhakam report was biased and meant to please the West.

He said the facts disclosed by witnesses showed that there was a violation of human rights.

Anuar gave examples showing detainees, who were videotaped in a daze, being knocked and kicked while they were being led to police

trucks.

The videotapes produced by the police also showed that the 5,000-odd crowd were given warnings slightly more than two minutes to disperse before the police started shooting water cannons.

"Anyone sitting in my position would come to the same conclusion," said Anuar.

The other two members of the inquiry panel were Prof Mehrun Siraj and Tan Sri Simon Sipaun.

Anuar also said he agreed that the police had authority to use minimal force necessary to disperse the crowd provided for under the law.

"It depends on the circumstances on how you use it."

Anuar said his stand was that the wrong use of force should be pointed out and that Suhakam report should be received in the right spirit.

"Try to correct the wrong that has been committed and we are happy if the correction is done," he said.

Sipaun said everybody, including the Prime Minister, had the prerogative to say what they wanted.