

Suhakam's Bersih rally hearing on Oct 12
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By Aidila Razak

The Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) will begin its public inquiry on Oct 12 to determine if the police had used excessive force during the Bersih 2.0 rally on July 9.

NONEAccording to commissioner-in-charge Khaw Lake Tee (right in photo), four to five witness will testify on the first day.

"There are 36 people who have been identified as witnesses for the duration of the hearing," she said, adding that it could go on for several days.

While Khaw declined to disclose the identities of the witnesses, she said they would include police personnel, as the force has agreed to cooperate with Suhakam.

She added that the list of witnesses could grow, depending on how many people the police decided to send.

The commission may also call upon its officers and commissioners who had acted as observers during the event.

Suhakam received 36 submissions of evidence, including documents, photographs and video recordings, she said, while Bersih 2.0 had lodged a separate complaint.

International interest

Khaw told Malaysiakini said she had been asked about the rally while at the 18th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva last week.

"But I declined (to comment) as I must remain independent since I would be presiding over the public inquiry," she said of the international interest in the incident.

NONETHousands took to the streets of Kuala Lumpur to call for electoral reform during the Bersih 2.0 rally, despite a heavy crackdown by the authorities.

In the days leading up to the rally, Bersih 2.0 was outlawed, while more than 1,000 supporters were arrested for such offences as wearing the Bersih 2.0 T-shirts, which were also declared illegal.

The Health Ministry said it would hold an inquiry into claims that riot police had shot teargas into the Tung Shin Hospital premises in Jalan Pudu as protesters sought refuge there.

Two days later, the police announced that two special teams had been set up to investigate the same matter.

To date, neither party has revealed its findings.