

IGP: Seizing reporters' cameras not police SOP
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Inspector-General of Police Ismail Omar has clarified that confiscating memory cards and cameras belonging to journalists is not part of the police standard operating procedure (SOP).

This contradicts Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's claim that the seizure of journalists' equipment while covering Saturday's Bersih 3.0 rally was part of police SOP.

NONE "There is no such thing. We act in accordance with the law," Ismail replied curtly when pressed on the matter at a press conference at the police headquarters at Bukit Aman.

Yesterday, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said that the camera and memory cards belonging to journalists were seized as part of the SOP.

Hishammuddin was cornered on the harsh action by the police on journalists covering the rally and whether it was to "black out" claims of police brutality at the scene.

Although he urged the people not to speculate on the severity of the claims, Hishammuddin commended the police for controlling the situation.

Among the journalists who were roughed up was Radzi Razak, from TheSun, who claimed that he was beaten up by seven or eight police officers, despite displaying his media card.

Chen Shaua Fui, assistant editor of news site Merdeka Review, said four policemen tried to snatch her camera and when she showed her press card, it was thrown aside and she was threatened with arrest if she continued taking pictures.

Camera memory cards seized

Malaysiakini's photojournalist Koh Jun Lin was temporarily detained after taking photographs of police beating up protesters. Koh's camera and memory card were also seized but his camera was returned upon his release.

Arif Kartono, a photographer with The Malay Mail, reported that he was assaulted by six uniformed police personnel and his camera was smashed. His colleague, Ashraf Shamsul Azlan, was also threatened and had his camera memory card seized.

Makkal Osai photographer P. Malayandy also had his camera confiscated and said he was assaulted when he tried photographing police beating up protesters.

NONEAI-Jazeera correspondent Harry Fawcett had said he and the international news network's cameraperson were shoved, causing their video camera to fall and be smashed, while Channel News Asia videographer Kenny Lew was allegedly punched by police and had his tripod seized.

Huang An Jian, a photographer with Chinese newspaper Guang Ming Daily, was arrested while taking photographs of protesters being arrested and The Malaysian Insider's Lisa J. Ariffin took a hit from a tear gas canister launched at the crowd.

Contrastingly, however, was the statement by Al Hijrah videographer Mohd Azri Mohd Salleh, who said he was by protesters when he tried to protect a policeman.

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