

## **Lawyers mull civil action against brutality**

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**By Nigel Aw**

The Bar Council is mulling over gathering volunteer lawyers to file civil suits on behalf of victims of violence during Bersih 3.0 last Saturday.

NONE "We will talk to our members, if we can gather enough members of the bar to volunteer to interview all the victims of human rights violation and probably pursue civil suits," said Bar Council president Lim Chee Wee (right).

Without specifying a time frame, Lim said this will be done "as soon as possible" in light of the release of its interim report today which said police brutality has become more widespread during the Bersih rally this time.

Aside from this, Lim said the Bar Council will also seek a meeting with the police and government to discuss on this matter on top of asking for an inquiry by the Malaysian Human Right Commission (Suhakam) into the events during the protest on April 28.

Following widespread police brutality during the rally, Lim reiterated the need for an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission to transform the police.

"We need a police transformation programme, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may be sincere in his policies for reform but the institutions are not catching up with his intentions," he told a press conference at the Bar Council headquarters in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

### **Minors held without legal representation**

Aside from excessive use of force, Bar Council deputy president Christopher Leong added that police had also denied those arrested legal representation at the Police Training Centre (Pulapol).

NONE "A parent came and said two minors were arrested and possibly brought to Pulapol. They asked the police at the gate if this could be confirmed but the police refused to entertain them; we do not understand such insensitivity," Leong said.

Both lawyers and families were left waiting outside Pulapol until 5 that morning, he added.

However, Leong noted that Kuala Lumpur CID chief Ku Chin Wah had exercised his prerogative to release all detainees immediately after they were processed and members of the media and Human Rights Commission were allowed access.

In a separate matter, responding to former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of the Bar Council yesterday on whether it was a legal body or a political party for calling an investigation into police brutality, Lim said government critics have often been labelled as politicians.

"Every time when people disagree with the authorities the standard answer is why don't you be a politician and come contest against me in my constituency... is there no room for dissent?" he asked, adding that the arguments made today had been based solely on human rights and laws.



