

Suhakam: Police conduct at Bersih 'unacceptable'
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Suhakam said the “ heavy-handed and arbitrary manner” in which the police dispersed participants of the Bersih 3.0 rally was “unacceptable conduct”.

“...The use of disproportionate and unwarranted force against the participants of the rally as well as members of the media is an unacceptable conduct on the part of the police, whose duty is to maintain law and order and public security in a professional manner,” said Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) chairperson Hasmy Agam.

NONEHe said the police need to use “proportionate and nonviolent methods” to disperse crowds at public assemblies, reminding the authorities of the United Nations Basic Principles on the use of force and firearms.

“(The convention) provides that law enforcement officials shall, as far as possible, apply non violent means before resorting to the use of force.”

He added that the police’s role was to “facilitate the people’s exercise of their right to assemble peacefully”.

“That participants in similar rallies held in a few other places like Georgetown, Kuantan, Johor Bahru, Ipoh, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu, were allowed to assemble and disperse in a peaceful, orderly and responsible manner without any untoward incident is testimony to the feasibility of such measures.”

NONEHasmy added that it was disappointing that the government had rejected Suhakam’s offers to act as mediator between the police and the organisers of public assemblies.

He said the commission is calling for witnesses of human rights infringements during the rally to come forward and for the public to submit relevant information, documents and evidence urgently to facilitate its investigation.

Bersih organisers had called for the commission to probe the incidents of violence and alleged police brutality that ensued shortly after the protestors at the April 28 rally had been called on to disperse.

The police have also formed a special panel to probe allegations against the force.