

Bersih: Mainstream media failing its own staff
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Electoral reform group Bersih has described the censorship of police brutality against protesters in the mainstream media as "shameful" despite the fact that their very own personnel had also fallen victim to violence during the Bersih 3.0 rally last Saturday.

"Given the violence towards members of the media, we find it shameful that fellow members of the mainstream media continue with their blatant censorship of the news on the violence committed against civilians by the police," it said in a joint statement by Bersih-steering committee members today.

It is at this juncture, it said, the media must step up to serve the interest of justice and report "the truth and nothing but the whole truth."

"In not doing so, they fail the rakyat and their fellow journalists, many of whom including those in the mainstream media are now bravely voicing their concerns.

"We support these journalists who are claiming their rights as professionals."

Journalists in several news organisations had on May 3 donned themselves in black as a sign of protest at violence aimed at journalist in conjunction with Press Freedom Day.

At least 12 journalists were believed to have been harassed or roughed up by police while one was beaten up by protesters when attempting to protect a police officer.

'What about other protesters?'

Meanwhile, Bersih said it appeared that the mooted independent panel to investigate the events of Bersih 3.0 will only look into violence against journalists and asked whether other victims of police brutality would similarly receive justice.

"Some detainees were attacked at the time of arrest, when they were in shops dining, or about to board LRTs while others were attacked after arrest despite the absence of struggle," it said.

The brutality, it said, suggested that a segment of the police force had acted with vengeance against the Bersih 3.0 participants, whether acting under specific orders or they had lost control.

"Bersih calls upon the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) to conduct an urgent independent inquiry into one of the most extensive acts of violence perpetrated by the authorities upon the people of Malaysia."