

Pro- and anti-Bersih groups in brief standoff

MalaysiaKini.com

May 07, 2012

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Two groups with opposing views on Bersih had a brief stand-off outside the Bukit Aman police headquarters today, as some 10 supporters turn up to submit a memorandum on police brutality during the Bersih 3.0 rally.

The supporters' group, led by Badrul Hisham Shaharin, better known as Chegubard, arrived about 2.50pm and was confronted by some 20 anti-Bersih protesters, who had been there since morning, after submitting their memorandum voicing support for the police.

The two groups spent two minutes shouting at each other, with a thin line of police officers sandwiched in between to prevent any scuffle.

The police then separated the groups, allowing Bukit Aman public relations officer ACP Ramli Yusof to receive the memorandum at the car park.

The anti-Bersih NGOs had been waiting since about 11.45am, after submitting their memorandum pledging support for the manner in which police had handled the rally for electoral reform on April 28.

They included members from Persatuan Veteran Tentera Melayu (PVTM), Gerakan Memartabatkan Pejuang Negara, Pertubuhan Ikatan Perpaduan Melay Gombak and Suara Anak Muda 1Malaysia.

“I ask Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to arrest those who were provocative, and their leaders,” said PVTM president Mohd Ali Baharom, who considered the rally an “evil element to topple the country”.

Their memo was also received by Ramli at the time, prior to the pro-Bersih group’s arrival.

After being pushed aside by police and reporters trying to hear the argument between the two groups, the Bersih opponents stayed on the sidelines as Badrul Hisham briefed Ramli on the content of his group’s document.

Members of the other group interjected occasionally and later started singing the patriotic song ‘*Perajurit Tanah Air*’. They also threatened to slap Badrul Hisham and to storm the group on overhearing 'Umno' mentioned, saying that Umno was not involved in the matter.

The group had also earlier shouted “Traitors!”, “You have insulted the police, but now you are here to see the police” and “Do not enter Bukit Aman”.

Photos included in memo

The confrontation ended about 3pm, when the pro-Bersih group - led by Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia - moved to another end of the car park to hold a press conference.

Its five-page memorandum included photos of at least 37 police officers suspected of brutality during the crackdown on Bersih 3.0, with the memorandum urging them to come forward.

“If there is no explanation and serious action from senior police officers or the ruling regime, we will not hesitate to publicise these officers by listing them on leaflets and posters,” reads the memorandum.

They do not consider the police their enemy, the memorandum says, "but merely victims of brainwashing by the government".

The issue of police brutality, it added, would not distract attention from Bersih's original aim, which was to call for clean and fair elections.

The memorandum has been endorsed by 28 NGOs, most of them youth groups including Kumpulan Anak Muda Independen, Malaysia Youth and Students Movement, PTPTN Victim's Club and Pro-Mahasiswa Nasional.

Approached by reporters after the meeting, Ramli said the memo would be referred to inspector-general of police Ismail Omar.

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