

Dr M refutes daughter's police violence claim
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has written to *The Star* to refute his daughter's latest column in the newspaper, where she decried police violence against Bersih 3.0 participants.

According to a report in the English language daily today, Mahathir (*right*) appeared to strongly disapprove of her daughter's position, which alluded that the disproportionate use of force by the police could have been ordered.

"Many who were hurt were not beaten by the police. The demonstrators, too, attacked anyone they thought were watching or recording what was happening.

"And there were the red shirts, the specially trained hooligans from PAS whose job was to use force," he said.

In her Musings column yesterday, Marina wrote: "And, if as our home minister insists, nobody ordered the police violence, what made them do it, and to such a disproportionate extent?

"Sixty-five people wound up in hospital, out of which only two were policemen. Surely this says something."

Mahathir also offered an explanation as to why Marina (far right) - who was at Bersih 3.0 with her daughter - was not hurt.

"That is because she did not try to break the barriers erected by the authorities. She sat down when she reached the barriers. Had all the demonstrators followed her example, no one would be hurt."

Justifying the police use of force, Mahathir said Marina should have known that in other places "barriers were pushed aside, the police cars had windscreens stamped on and broken, and overturned."

FRU units replaced barricade

In Marina's article 'Independent commission the way to go', she recounted her experience at Lebuh Pasar, near the Bar Council headquarters, before the violence broke out.

Marina wrote that the situation was extremely peaceful and festive until the police lined up behind the barricade suddenly and inexplicably withdrew, replaced by FRU units.

"I have been puzzling over this for a while. How is it that the police turned from benign to hostile seemingly without much reason?" she wrote.

On April 28, Bersih led an estimated 100,000 people to the streets of Kuala Lumpur to call for free and fair elections.

The protesters gathered around Dataran Merdeka, which was sealed off with barbed wire, for several hours until they were ordered to disperse at 3pm.

But almost immediately after issued dispersal orders, the barbed-wire barricade was breached, followed by torrents of water cannon blasts and a hail of tear gas canisters.

Scores of protesters and journalists claim that they were brutalised by police personnel.

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