

Bersih panel: IGP gives Hanif the thumbs-up

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Police chief Ismail Omar has expressed support for a predecessor, Hanif Mohammad Hanif Omar, who has been appointed to head the independent panel to investigate violence during the Bersih 3.0 rally.

Ismail (*left*) said the police force believes Hanif will be professional and investigate the matter without bias, citing that police personnel have previously been jailed for offences.

One such example was in the shooting of teenager Aminulrasyid Amzah, he said today.

"We welcome (Hanif's appointment). Furthermore, he is not alone on the panel... there are many others on it," he said, adding that police would cooperate fully with the panel.

Ismail also described the recent Malaysian Bar's extraordinary general meeting (EGM) as biased against the police and urged the Bar Council to adopt a more open attitude.

The Bar EGM held last Friday passed 12 resolutions, among them condemning police brutality during the rally and calling on the IGP and home minister to openly apologise to the people.

'Police willing to replace tear gas...'

Asked about the United Nations recently rebutting the police claim that tear gas "is a UN-approved method for crowd dispersal", Ismail said the UN and police have different opinions.

He denied that police had abused the name of the UN to justify the use of tear gas and water cannons, saying such uses are "standard operating procedures" (SOP) in Malaysia.

"Even if you say this is against the principles set by UN, it's not right and too narrow," Ismail argued.

"It is the safest method, and thus far has not caused any death."

He also said that police would look further into the matter and would seek improvements based on needs.

The police were also willing to adopt other methods if there were better recommendations, he said.

Ismail also advised the protesters wanted by police for their role in the April 28 rally to surrender.

"We are still looking for them, if can, just surrender... what is so hard about this? We have both legal and investigative systems," he added.

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