

Dr M backs cops' use of force against Bersih 'hooligans'

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Police had to resort to force to stop “hooliganism” by protesters during last month’s Bersih 3.0 pro-electoral reform rally, to prevent harm to fellow officers and destruction of public property, argued former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

“What are the police supposed to do? Allow the hooligans to do what they like? Accept being kicked by the hooligans? Accept having their patrol cars being smashed and overturned?”

Mahathir (*left*) asked on his blog.

“Police brutality”, he said, is being bandied about “indiscriminately” by irresponsible parties, singling out the Malaysian Bar, even when it was necessary for police to apply permissible force to preserve safety and public order.

Mahathir accused Bersih 3.0 demonstrators as being “obviously violent” and the police as only doing what is necessary to contain the situation.

“Obviously from the video clips and pictures, the demonstrators not only broke the barriers but attacked, literally attacked the police who were tasked with keeping the demonstrators from breaking the barriers.

“They chased police cars, shattered the windscreen and overturned it. They kicked a policeman who had fallen on the ground.”

Indeed, he stressed, that the Malaysian police exercised remarkable restraint, observed Mahathir, compared to their counterparts overseas.

“In other countries they would not just threaten but would probably shoot their assailants. As far as can be ascertained they did not use their side-arms. They must have restrained themselves.”

Mahathir also took a dig at the Malaysian Bar for their caustic criticisms against perceived police brutality during the rally in a series of resolutions passed during the organisation’s EGM last week.

“Next time let’s have members of the Bar Council to keep law and order during violent demos and riots. I am sure Bersih 4.0 will be free of violence as the demonstrators would not be stopped from breaking rules and laws,” sniped the veteran politician.

Well-documented accusations of violence by both the police and demonstrators have surfaced following what was the most violent protest and brutal response by law enforcement in recent history.