

Bersih: Don't go to the police station alone

MalaysiaKini.com

May 19, 2012

By Koh Jun Lin

Victims of police brutality have been warned not to lodge police reports by themselves, but to engage the help of Bersih NGO Lawyers for Liberty (LFL).

Bersih at a press conference today said that 75 individuals have so far contacted them alleging police brutality during the mammoth rally for clean and fair elections on April 28.

Coalition partner Lawyers for Liberty's (LFL) coordinator Fadhiah Nadwa Fikri (right) said photographs are being collected, testimonies are being recorded, and police reports are being lodged on the matter.

However, she said, there are more victims who are afraid to come forward.

“Our message: Don't go (to the police station) alone. Try to contact us; we will provide assistance and accompany you to the police stations and lodge the police reports,” she said.

Other groups trying to document the allegations include Suaram and the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall's civil rights committee.

Fadhiah cited the allegations of her client Mohd Safuan Mamat as the reason why people are afraid to approach the police. The 25-year old had claimed that he was tortured to extract a confession after he had surrendered to the police.

‘Independent probes needed’

When asked by reporters about Kuala Lumpur criminal investigation chief Ku Chin Wah's statement that Mohd Safuan was not cooperative with the police probe into his claims, she replied that he had been cooperative until he was beaten.

“In Mohd Safuan's case and other cases, we specifically demand that the police set up an independent team to investigate these cases.

“We don't want to go back into the same police station where the perpetrators are, because it won't be independent,” she said.

She said it was because a favourable response from the police has not been forthcoming, that she has approached Suhakam on the matter and is exploring other legal avenues.

Also present at the press conference were 18 people claiming to be victims of police brutality during the rally.

For example, Ang Beng Guan claimed that his was taking pictures and videos with his mobile phone when it was knocked off his hands by a tear gas grenade.

Mohd Najib Rahimi alleged that he sustained a skull fracture from being beaten by about 30 police officers, while Mohd Saufi Othman (above) claimed that he was beaten on his chest with a handcuff and a pistol.

Cops acting on orders?

“There seems to be a pattern. If there is a pattern, there is a methodology, so there must have been an instruction (from the police’s superiors),” concluded Bersih steering committee member Hishamuddin Rais, noting that a number of the police on that day did not wear name tags and attacked in groups.

Bersih co-chairperson A Samad Said (right) concurred, saying that the incidents took place after 4pm when the rally was originally scheduled to end.

“We wanted the sit-in protest from 2pm to 4pm. If we wanted to do anything (cause trouble), that would have been the time. So after 4pm, I am convinced that there was an order (from the authorities) to instil fear,” he said.

At the same press conference Bersih reiterated its call for the government to allow UN special rapporteurs to carry out their own independent investigations

They want Frank La Rue, rapporteur on the promotion and the protection of the right to freedom and expression, and Maina Kiai, rapporteur on the right to freedom of assembly and of association, “to carry out their own independent investigations and to present their report to the Malaysian people and to the international community.”

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/198413>