

## **Hanif willing to meet Bar Council on Bersih probe**

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**By Aidila Razak**

Former police chief Hanif Omar, who heads an independent panel that will probe alleged violence during the Bersih 3.0 rally, has remained unperturbed by the lack of support from Bersih and the Bar Council.

Instead, in a press statement today, he said he is willing to "meet the Bar Council and any other party" for the benefit of the investigations.

He said the panel should be viewed as an alternative avenue for those who want to look into the April 28 incidents and participation "for those who are willing to cooperate on a voluntary basis".

"It is my hope that this panel is given space to conduct its duties without prejudice from anyone," he said.

Hanif had received brickbats due to statements he made about the rally and its organisers prior to his appointment to the panel.

This includes his suspicion that communist elements were behind Bersih and that the rally may have been a coup attempt.

However, he has defended his appointment by saying that his track record has proven that he acts with integrity.

The panel has also been criticised because it has no legal standing and cannot subpoena witnesses.

However, Hanif urged all those who have information on the mammoth Bersih 3.0 rally to come forward.

Terms of reference

The press statement was released to media at about 3pm, after the panel's first meeting. It cancelled a planned press conference.

At the meeting were Sinar Harian managing editor Hussamuddin Yaacob (centre in photo), psychologist Dr Rozami Ismail and Sin Chew Group legal advisor Liew Peng Chuan. The other panelists could not attend 'for unavoidable reasons'.

The panel members agreed to 10 terms of references which include investigating the cause of "disorder at and around Dataran Merdeka and in areas leading to it, as well as the nature of actual

disorder...from 3pm on April 28".

It further seeks to review police standard operating procedures in relation to crowd and assembly control, and to establish if there was:

- any unlawful or negligent act was done and who was involved
- proper use of force including water cannon and tear gas
- random, widespread and wanton physical assault and brutality by the police on members of the public and media professionals
- unwarranted arrests or confiscation or destruction of video recording and equipment
- unlawful denial of lawyers those arrested
- any steps by the organisers to ensure a peaceful rally and dispersal thereafter

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