

**Musa: Protesters shouldn't be beaten after arrest**

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**By Nigel Aw**

Protesters should not be beaten when they are arrested, said former inspector-general of police Musa Hassan in reference to last month's Bersih 3.0 rally that resulted in widespread claims of police brutality.

"Force is used when others use force against police or when there is a threat. But after someone is arrested and police hit them, that is not allowed and is wrong in law," Musa said in an interview.

However, he said, police can use "reasonable force" under certain circumstances and cannot be prosecuted for this.

"Under Section 84 of the Criminal Procedure Code, police can use reasonable force during a riot to maintain peace. The section also states that the police officer cannot be charged in court for that action.

"(In the case of Bersih 3.0), when (a car was) overturned and public property was damaged, it is no longer a peaceful gathering and is considered a riot," Musa said.

As for journalists, Musa said, it would be advisable to separate them and place them in a safe zone.

"But if journalists insist on following (the police), then they should be protected," he said.

Asked to comment on allegations that police deliberately targeted journalists for their recording devices, he replied: "That is not the way, that's not right. Whether there was an instruction to do that, I don't know, I'm outside the force now."

Commenting on claims that several police officers and men on duty at the rally had concealed their name- and number-tags, Musa said this had never happened during his tenure.

If it is an operation, they must wear their name tags. Even if they do not have a number tag, there has to be a name tag displayed on their uniforms.

"Even the Federal Reserve Unit members must wear them."

The Bar Council in its observation report had remarked that police brutality against protesters was widespread, with journalists also being targeted, and that police personnel had failed to wear identification tags.

During Musa's tenure, the police had been accused of brutality, particularly during the first

Bersih and Hindraf protests in 2007. However, the allegations were not as serious as during Bersih 3.0.

'Keep out communism'

Defending his claim that Bersih 3.0 was a coup d'etat to overthrow the government, Musa said: "Look at the situation, you had the anti-PTPTN group, how many days they were there?"

"Their numbers were small but if you extend it with this (Bersih 3.0) that has larger numbers (and), followed by the Labour Day protest on May 1, anything could happen."

He noted that even though the influence of communism has weakened, any other extremist element could still infiltrate the Bersih 3.0 protest because of the huge crowd.

Those who are demonstrating may be sincere in their fight for democracy and cleaning up the Election Commission, but the fear is there may be people with other agendas in the crowd.

"There were so many people, you don't know who were in the crowd. Anyone can use Bersih's name... all they need is to put on a Bersih t-shirt. Even a terrorist can do it, we will never know."

He cautioned that communism is an ideology and therefore it can still make a comeback in the future.

"It (communism) will never die. We need to be on alert and if we see any sign of it coming back, then we need to take steps to make sure it doesn't happen," he added.