

**Witness: Bersih participant's ear almost 'sliced off'**  
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**By S Pathmawathy**

A volunteer with the Red Crescent Society (RCS) during the April 28 Bersih 3.0 rally saw a man with his ear almost "sliced off" and he insisted that it was caused by "deterrent" equipment used by the police.

Khairul Anuar Pawanchik, 60, testified today that he saw a man rush past him along Leboh Ampang, holding his left ear, which was "dangling" from the upper cartilage.

The retired army officer, in all certainty, said the injury was caused by the "razor barbed concertina wire", most often used by the military in war zones to slow the approaching enemy.

According to Khairul, razor-encrusted barbed wires, unlike the regular ones, are used to scare off the enemy on the battlefield and are also installed on prison walls as a warning to prisoners plotting to escape.

"The police shouldn't have used the razored barbed wire. It is not to be used in public places," he told today's session of the public inquiry into the electoral reform rally conducted by the Human Rights Commission (Suhakam).

"It is used to slow the movement of the enemy before killing them," said Khairul, sharing his experience as a foot soldier and platoon officer prior to his retirement in 1999.

It takes about 10 minutes to remove the razor barbed concertina wire with special double-layered gloves, he said, adding that removing them with bare hands would result in injury.

"Normally, the army uses the regular mash or barbed wire and this is standard operating procedure in the riot prevention training," he said, adding that he received riot control training during his service.

He noticed that razored barbed wire was used to cordon off Dataran Merdeka, while the regular barbed wire was used along Jalan Raja Laut but "it was placed too low. It should have been hoisted up to about 12ft to block the approaching crowd".

Khairul was part of a 17-member Red Crescent team travelling in a six-vehicle convoy on duty from 3pm onwards during the April 28 rally for electoral reform.

Calls to kill a police officer

The RCS identified four checkpoints to distribute water and to provide aid, he said.

The situation along Jalan Raja Laut was peaceful and lively at that time, until about an hour later when he saw some 300 people chasing after "something".

"They were running towards the Medan Mara building... so I went there and they let me through after looking at my Red Crescent uniform.

"I checked with the security guard stopping people from breaking through the glass doors of the building. He told me that an injured police officer was inside, but I didn't see the officer.

"I heard someone in the shouting, "Bunuh polis, polis jahat" (kill the police, police are bad). So I stepped up and signalled the crowd to stop moving forward and told them "polis pun manusia, mereka ada keluarga" (the police are also human, they have families).

"To pacify them, I told them that if they hurt the officer, I would have to be a witness to their crime. At that point, the angry mob cooled down and two of them hugged and thanked me," he said.

From there, Khairul said, his team proceeded to Jalan Sultan Ismail while he stayed behind to ensure the angry crowd backed off.

It was then that he witnessed 15 to 20 traffic policemen and two police officers on patrol motorcycles pass the intersection between Jalan Raja Laut and Medan Tuanku.

The Suhakam panel members appeared shocked when Khairul said he saw a traffic policeman "holding up a revolver" while manoeuvring his motorcycle with one hand and threatening the rally participants, "kalau berani, datang sekarang" (if you dare, come now).

"The policemen were moving fast, against the traffic as the people were walking by the side of the road. I was very afraid something untoward would happen.

"In my opinion, it was a bad move by the policeman. If he fell, the revolver could have gone off and injured the people. But this was beyond what I could do, so I left the scene," he said.

Lawyer injured on face dragged away

"That was also when I spotted people covering their faces and I heard tear gas canisters being fired. About 2,000 to 3,000 people were running away from Dataran Merdeka.

"I saw plainclothes police officers dragging participants by their collars and hands, and rounding up more people.

"That was also when a man - bleeding profusely from his cheeks - told me he was a lawyer observing the rally," said Khairul, referring to Mohd Haijan Omar, who was monitoring the rally for Lawyers for Liberty.

Khairul then produced cuttings from the PKR party organ, Suara Keadilan, and said he was "150 percent" sure that it was Mohd Haijan who stopped to ask for help but was dragged off by the police officers.

"I couldn't help him. I couldn't give any assistance. I just gave him a handkerchief to cover his injured cheeks," he added.

The army veteran also contributed his knowledge on the type of riot control equipment used by the police, saying that the M79 grenade launcher used to fire tear gas canisters was manufactured in the 1960s and used by US Army during the Vietnam War.

"It must be used with caution because I saw two men, one with a bruised cheek and another a bruised chest, which was caused by the tear gas canisters," he said, and he called

on the Suhakam panel to compel the police force to give a demonstration on riot control.

Khairul Anuar was the last of three witnesses who testified before the commission on the first day of its public inquiry, which is expected to run over nine days until Aug 1.

The public inquiry is investigating human rights violations during the clashes that occurred after police fired tear gas and chemical-laced water cannons to disperse nearly 100,000 demonstrators, following a breach of the barricade in front of Dataran Merdeka.

Police have said the use of force was necessary to prevent "a riot" after the breach of a court order barring Bersih 3.0 and members of the public from entering the historic square through the April 28 weekend.

Dozens of tear gas canisters were fired at the crowd, forcing them to retreat north of Jalan Raja Laut, while some ran towards Jalan Tun Perak as police and anti-riot squads moved in.

The panel is headed by Suhakam vice-chairperson Khaw Lake Tee, who is assisted by commissioners Detta Samen and Mahmood Zuhdi A Majid, who also sat on Suhakam's Bersih 2.0 inquiry panel.

ASP S Shanmugam held the watching brief for the police force, while the Bar Council was represented by Roger Chan and the Bersih steering committee by Daniel Albert.

The inquiry will continue on July 11.

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