

Take responsibility for errant cops, Bersih tells PM
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 4 — Bersih 2.0 tonight urged Datuk Seri Najib Razak to accept responsibility for his government's over-reaction to its July 9 march for free and fair elections after a Health Ministry investigation found riot police had crossed standard operating procedures.

A leader from the 62-member coalition of civil societies also called on the prime minister to correct the injustice done, saying the first step would be to stop labelling Bersih 2.0 as illegal.

"PM has to be held responsible for the crackdown and suppression of demonstrators," Maria Chin Abdullah (picture) told The Malaysian Insider in an immediate reaction to Putrajaya's admission tonight.

"It can't use them as scapegoats," the Empower boss said.

Home Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Mahmood Adam said tonight that errant policemen who had fired tear gas at marchers near the Tung Shin Hospital in the capital city during the rally would be referred to the police's disciplinary board.

"The investigation results concluded that there were unethical actions which were beyond the SOP of the Royal Malaysian Police when enforcement was performed on rally participants who were wrongly using the hospital premises," Mahmood said in a statement.

Chin said it was good the government was finally admitting its mistake.

But she castigated Najib for not owning up to it earlier.

"The PM should actually come out and say they made a mistake. And the PM should ask the A-G to withdraw its court case against Bersih," she said.

The Bersih steering committee is suing the government to get it to stop outlawing the coalition.

Putrajaya and police had earlier denied any wrongdoing despite proof given by Bersih and those at the rally.

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) is now waiting for police to answer questions into the incident after a complaint from Bersih, which held the rally to call for free and fair elections.

Police had absolved themselves of any wrongdoing during the July 9 rally after setting up six internal teams to investigate claims of police brutality that followed after nearly 1,700 were arrested, scores injured and an ex-soldier died during chaotic scenes in the capital.

But Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai ordered a second probe into the Tung Shin

incident on July 14 after a group of medical consultants had written to the media refuting the hospital board and police who claimed that no tear gas or water cannons were fired into the hospital.

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