

Perkasa claws at Suhakam's Bersih rally rights probe
The Malaysian Insider
October 13, 2011
By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 — Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali demanded today the Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) justify its inquiry into allegations of rights violations during the Bersih 2.0 rally, saying the commission should not entertain complaints by illegal groups.

The commission's inquiry commenced on Tuesday with witnesses testifying that riot police had fired tear gas directly at a crowd of peaceful and "non-hostile" Bersih supporters and that demonstrators were violently shoved to the ground and kicked by police personnel during July 9 rally.

The rally for free and fair elections turned chaotic when police fired tear gas and water cannons at thousands of demonstrators, resulting in nearly 1,700 arrests, scores injured and the death of ex-soldier Baharuddin Ahmad, 59.

Today, Ibrahim told Suhakam to explain why it considered human rights violations to have occurred during the rally, when the both the event and its organiser were deemed illegal by the government.

"By entertaining the complaints by illegal groups like Bersih 2.0, Suhakam has given recognition to other illegal groups as well," he said in a statement.

The Pasir Mas MP insisted that human rights "cannot go above our country's laws".

"I hope Suhakam, which has a role to uphold human rights, also understands the issue that I'm bringing up and that the people who do not like chaos on the road also have human rights," he said.

The outspoken Malay rights group leader then said human rights are not just for Bersih supporters.

"What about the rights of people who hated Bersih's actions? Where are their human rights?" he asked.

Suhakam said it had received the names of 26 individuals who had agreed to record their statements and testify. Three witnesses have testified so far.

The inquiry has set itself three terms of reference — to identify human rights violations on or before July 9; to determine how the violations occurred as well as the process and agency involved; and to make recommendations to prevent any recurrence.

The inquiry resumes on November 15.

The Malaysian Insider
Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider
Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/perkasa-claws-at-suhakams-b>

ersih-rally-rights-probe/