

IGP: Cops told to give way to protesters unless they breached Dataran barricade

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KUALA LUMPUR: Street demonstrations like Saturday's Bersih 3.0 rally are not part of Malaysian culture and threaten the safety of the country said Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar on Monday.

He said that these demonstrations encouraged aggression and should not be condoned by the public.

"The organisers did not keep their promise of having a peaceful demonstration.

"I regret that the organisers of the rally did not take up the city mayor's offer to hold their demonstrations at either Stadium Merdeka or Bukit Jalil Stadium," he told a press conference at Bukit Aman on Monday.

Ismail said all police personnel on duty during the rally on Saturday were issued directives to observe and give way to demonstrators.

"My men and women on duty during the rally were told not to engage the crowd, unless they defied the court order.

"Police personnel at the barricade did not take any action against demonstrators until the barricade was breached at about 2.55pm," he said.

He said a number of police reports had been lodged by demonstrators and policemen.

"We take all these complaints seriously and will thoroughly investigate.

"We acted with full restraint for several hours and only took action to disperse the crowds after the barricades were breached," he said.

Ismail said he was also made aware of several complaints made by journalists and press photographers on duty during the rally who were allegedly intimidated by police personnel.

"We will look into this matter as well," he said.

Meanwhile, Federal logistics department director Comm Datuk Zulkifli Abdullah said a total of 12 police vehicles were damaged during the rally.

"We are in the process of assessing the cost of damage to the five police SUV's, four police cars, two motorcycles and one police van," he said.

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