

**Police Acted After Demonstrators Turned Violent, Says IGP
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 30 (Bernama) -- Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar today defended the police action in using water cannons and firing tear gas during last Saturday's gathering close to Dataran Merdeka, saying the demonstrators had turned unruly and crashed through police barricades.

"The gathering last Saturday was not peaceful after it turned into a riot and the demonstrators damaged public property and injured police officers on duty," he told a news conference.

He said the organisers of the gathering did not keep to their promise to gather peacefully and did not exercise control over their supporters, allowing the demonstrators to turn violent and violate provisions of the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012.

It was clearly evident that the police had to act after the demonstrators rammed the barricades and barbed wire placed around Dataran Merdeka which had been declared out of bounds by a court order, he said.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall had rejected an application by the organisers to hold the gathering at the square, stating that it was only allowed for official national-level events.

Ismail said the police had much evidence, such as photographs and video recordings, to show that they performed their duty with great patience and prudence up to the time the demonstrators turned violent.

He said the police would conduct an investigation to uncover the motives and identify individuals or groups responsible for sparking the violence at the gathering.

"Anyone, even any policeman, who wishes to lodge a police report on the violence which affected them can do so immediately and I will accept any report to facilitate the probe," he said.

Ismail also said that several tampered pictures were being distributed over the Internet, adding that this could tarnish the nation's image.

"I have come across two pictures, one showing Dataran Merdeka full of yellow-shirted demonstrators and the other, the actual one, showing an empty Dataran Merdeka with the demonstrators on the periphery.

"The picture has been tampered with and distributed via the Internet. This tarnishes the nation's image, and I will monitor this," he said.

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