

Form RCI on Bersih 3.0, Proham tells Putrajaya
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 2 — Putrajaya must establish a special commission to investigate the violence that occurred during the Bersih 3.0 rally, the Association for the Promotion of Human Rights (Proham) said today.

Proham said a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into last Saturday's rally is urgently needed in light of too many conflicting reports regarding violent clashes between Bersih supporters and the police.

"Proham strongly believes that the federal government must institute immediately an independent commission with a sense of urgency to give a true picture of what really transpired on April 28 and clarify the numerous complaints and abuses," Proham chairman Tan Sri Simon Sipaun and committee members Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam and Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria said in a joint statement.

The official version of events by the police and Home Ministry gave the impression that rally participants were violent and attacked the authorities as well as damaged public property, the statement said.

"There is an alternative view which is largely documenting police inaction in crowd control, abuses and excessive use of tear gas, inadequate time provided for crowd dispersal and very little avenues for crowds to leave as the LRT stations were shut.

"The physical handling of Bersih supporters and journalists by the police is well documented. There are numerous personal accounts and eyewitness accounts of these in the internet so it has become difficult to dismiss them," Proham added.

The group said the only way to ascertain a concise account of what happened on Saturday was through an RCI which would "ensure that those at fault in carrying out acts of violence will be charged in a court of law."

Saturday's Bersih rally for free and fair elections turned chaotic when Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) personnel began firing tear gas and water cannons after demonstrators breached police lines in their attempt to reach Dataran Merdeka.

The event was initially planned for the historic square but authorities had secured a court order on Friday barring its use for public assemblies until May 1, forcing Bersih supporters to splinter into groups.

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