

Bar to hold EGM next week on Bersih 3.0
The Malaysian Insider
May 04, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 — Bar Council chief Lim Chee Wee today called for an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) next Friday to discuss the storm of issues surrounding last Saturday's Bersih 3.0 rally for electoral reforms, two days after accusing the authorities of human rights violations and widespread brutality.

Notice for the May 11 EGM was issued on the Malaysian Bar's official website earlier this afternoon, to discuss a motion "in relation to the events of and surrounding the public rally on 28 April 2012 organised by Bersih 3.0, and matters in connection therewith".

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak earlier today labelled last Saturday's demonstration an attempt by certain quarters to overthrow the elected Barisan Nasional (BN) government, as he hardened his administration's position towards the electoral reform movement.

Lim had previously said that the Bar's monitoring team found more instances of police brutality compared to last year's July 9 Bersih event.

He previously said the authorities failed to take heed of criticism and recommendations outlined by the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) with regards to police conduct during Bersih's first two rallies, and lamented on how "little has changed."

"It is incomprehensible, if not a reflection of the sheer incompetence or arrogance of the police force, that it has not learnt from its past mistakes in the management of assemblies of people exercising their constitutional right, so well documented and analysed by Suhakam in its two reports and the pending ongoing inquiry.

"Police brutality this time around has been magnified; there is more police brutality (compared to last year.) There was arbitrary use of tear gas, water cannons," Lim told a news conference last Tuesday.

The lawyer said that last weekend's events showed an "urgent" need for the police force to undergo a "transformation programme", to be changed by force of statute through the establishment of the recommended Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC).

He said the Bar's interim report on the Bersih 3.0 rally had found that the rally was peaceful until around 3pm when the police unleashed water cannon and tear gas on the crowd; the use of force by the police without any obvious provocation or cause, was far worse, indiscriminate, disproportionate and excessive; and police brutality more widespread.

It also noted a concerted effort by the police to prevent and stop any recording of their actions and conduct. Such actions included firing tear gas directly at the crowd and in such pattern as to box in the participants rather than allow them to disperse quickly.

According to the council, this was found to elicit pockets of retaliatory behaviour by some participants of the rally. The police were also observed taunting and mocking the crowd. When items were thrown by some of the participants at the police, the police responded in kind.

Lastly, the report highlighted that not all police personnel were wearing and displaying their police identification number on their uniforms.

Lim also said that the authorities had disregarded provisions within the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (UNBPUFF), the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (UNCC), and Amnesty International guidelines.

The Bar EGM will take place at the Sunway Putra Hotel (formerly the Legend Hotel) in the city at 3pm next Friday.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bar-to-hold-egm-next-week-on-bersih-3.0/>