

**Suhakam will probe Bersih 3.0 violence**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**May 04, 2012**  
**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 — The Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) will investigate complaints of violent clashes between police and protesters during Bersih 3.0, which the prime minister has said was sparked off by the group's refusal to relocate to Stadium Merdeka.

At a press conference here today, Suhakam vice-chairman Datuk Dr Khaw Lake Tee said upon investigating the complaints, the commission would later decide if it should conduct a public inquiry into the protest, like it had done for Bersih 2.0 last year.

File photo of policemen apprehending a protestor at the April 28 Bersih rally. Suhakam said it will receive complaints about violence at the rally. Suhakam's public inquiry into Bersih 2.0 commenced in October last year and was completed this April 17. Copies of its findings and recommendations were released to the media today.

"I think we have indicated in our earlier press release that we will receive complaints (on Bersih 3.0) and Suhakam will investigate into these complaints and decide on further action," she told reporters when asked if an inquiry would be conducted soon.

Bersih and opposition leaders have already called on the independent commission to probe allegations of police brutality during last Saturday's rally, which saw riot police spraying tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters.

Earlier today, DAP MP Tony Pua suggested that Putrajaya appoint Suhakam to conduct the inquiry, saying there was no need for the government to form a separate independent panel.

"Why is there a need for the prime minister to set up a new 'independent' committee which will require a fresh set-up and selection of new panel members?" Pua, the Petaling Jaya Utara MP said.

He pointed out that Suhakam was empowered to "advise the government and/or relevant authorities of complaints against them and to recommend appropriate measures to be taken", under section 4(2) of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act.

He said Suhakam commissioners are appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the recommendation of the prime minister.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had yesterday said that "credible, experience and respectable" individuals will make up the government's independent panel, adding that it would likely be formed by next week.

Najib had also appeared to blame Bersih 3.0 organisers for the violence that took place last

Saturday, pointing out that the clashes could have been avoided if the group had agreed to hold their protest at Stadium Merdeka instead of Dataran Merdeka.

"These things would not have happened at all," he told a press conference.

Chaos reigned on the streets of Kuala Lumpur for over four hours after 3pm last Saturday when police fired tear gas and water cannons and chased protesters down the streets of the capital to disperse what had initially started out as a peaceful protest calling for free and fair elections.

The violence has resulted in finger-pointing by all parties involved, even as police investigations are being carried out.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/suhakam-will-probe-bersih-3.0-violence/>