

Hanif pledges to be impartial as Bersih 3.0 panel chief
The Malaysian Insider
May 11 , 2012
By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 — Tun Mohammad Hanif Omar has maintained he will be fair and impartial when heading Putrajaya's independent panel on allegations of violence during Bersih 3.0.

The former Inspector-General of Police dismissed allegations that the panel would return biased findings with him on board, saying that he has always acted fairly in previous enquiries and police investigations.

"If they are concerned about unfairness, they can ask themselves whether I was unfair back then," Hanif told *Sinar Harian*.

The former top cop was part of a special committee tasked with investigating the fatal police shooting of 14-year-old Aminulrasyid Amzah two years ago.

"In May 2010, I was part of the special police monitoring panel investigating the sudden death of Aminulrasyid Amzah in Shah Alam... where the panel's scope involved complaints against the police," he said.

Hanif said he hoped to be able to carry out his duties professionally and responsibly.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders have demanded Hanif step down as head of the special panel on Bersih 3.0.

PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this was necessary to ensure the panel is completely fair and neutral in its investigations into incidents surrounding the April 28 rally.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said Hanif's appointment was the "worst" decision the Najib administration had made in three years.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said that Hanif had already made clear his opposition to Bersih and his former position as IGP would be a conflict of interest when the panel examines allegations of police brutality.

As such, he said, it was a "forgone conclusion" that the panel would absolve all police personnel from blame over the violent incidents during Bersih 3.0 last month.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein announced the names of the six-man panel tasked with investigating allegations of police violence against Bersih 3.0 protesters on April 28.

Apart from Hanif, the other panel members include former Chief Judge of Borneo Tan Sri Steve Shim, *Sinar Harian* managing director Datuk Hussamuddin Yaacob, Media Chinese International legal adviser Liew Peng Chuan, Petronas corporate affairs senior general manager Datuk Medan Abdullah and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia psychology Professor Dr Ruzmi Ismail.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak pledged last week that "credible, experienced and respectable" individuals would form the independent panel to investigate alleged acts of violence during Bersih 3.0.

Najib said that he, along with the entire government and members of the public, are keeping a close eye on investigations into the allegations that journalists, both local and foreign, had been roughed up during the rally for free and fair elections.

But Najib has come under fire for his administration's selection of Hanif to head the panel, even after the latter had agreed with the prime minister's claim that Bersih 3.0 was an attempt to overthrow the government and even claimed that communist sympathisers were involved in the event.

Chaos reigned on the streets of Kuala Lumpur for over four hours after 3pm on April 28 when police fired tear gas and water cannons and chased protesters down the streets to disperse what had initially begun as a peaceful protest calling for free and fair elections.

The Bar Council has said that its observers found that police brutality at the rally was "magnified" compared to already chaotic scenes during a similar gathering for free and fair elections last July 9.

Six local pressmen and 12 photographers and journalists from the foreign media were reportedly assaulted during the fracas on April 28.

Both local and foreign media groups have condemned the hard-handed tactics used on the media, whom they pointed out were merely doing their job.

Police had begun firing the tear gas and water cannons after some demonstrators breached the barricade in front of Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and rushed into Dataran Merdeka, which the court had barred the public from entering that particular weekend.

They fired as far as the DBKL premises, which are across Jalan Parlimen, and the move broke up the crowd who fled helter-skelter but police chased them down at Jalan Tun Perak and Jalan Raja Laut.

Hakcipta © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/hanif-pledges-to-be-impartial-as-bersih-3.0-panel-chief/>