

Cops stomped on injured girl during Bersih rally, Suhakam inquiry told
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 11 — A policeman stomped on the chest of an injured teenaged girl during the chaotic April 28 Bersih rally in the capital city, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) heard today, as more witnesses stepped forward to detail their harrowing encounters with the authorities.

Businessman Kumar Suppiah, the third witness in today's inquiry, told a three-man panel that he was seeking shelter at a bank near City Hall on Jalan Raja Laut after police had fired tear gas canisters into the crowd when he bumped into a teenaged girl, whose hand he suspected was broken.

He related how he and some 10 other people had helped to wrap the girl's hand in a towel before alerting several policemen nearby to get further medical treatment for the injured teen who was screaming in pain.

One of the policemen had promised to call for an ambulance to take the girl to hospital, Kumar told the panel, but another police team that arrived on the scene suddenly started assaulting civilians, including the injured girl.

"I saw him (the policeman) stomp on the girl's chest. I was pushed into the glass panel in the ATM (automated teller machines) area. They then dragged me out and started beating us," Kumar recounted.

He added that the policemen also hurled expletives at them and did not stop until ordered to by another police officer.

"Then I saw the ambulance come and take away the girl whose neck was bandaged," Kumar said.

Another witness, Arshad Abbas, a former Measat Broadcast Network Systems Sdn Bhd (Astro) customer service agent said a policeman attacked him verbally with the words "accursed being" when he asked the police the reason why they were so rough on the demonstrators.

"I wanted to know [why] the police were using violence and a policeman in blue uniform called me an 'accursed being' and told me I was stopping him from doing his duties," Arshad said.

He also claimed he saw the same policeman who had shouted at him, pushing and pulling an elderly Chinese man dressed in a green T-shirt by the collar while trying to arrest him.

"I saw the same cop abusing the Chinese man who may have been an innocent bystander," he said.

Arshad also alleged that the police brutality continued when he was also beaten by the police and accused of being Pakatan Rakyat leader, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's pimp.

"A policeman accused me of being Anwar's pimp. I was also called an idiot and that I caused too many problems for the policemen," he said.

The inquiry is aimed at determining whether any violations of human rights were committed against any person or party during and after the gathering.

The inquiry panel led by Suhakam vice-chairman Datuk Dr Khaw Lake Tee and aided by commissioners Professor Datuk Dr Mahmood Zuhdi Abdul Majid and Detta Samen will be interviewing some 22 witnesses over a period of 22 days.

To date, six witnesses have testified before observers from the Malaysian Bar, police and several other independent monitors.

The inquiry continues on July 16.

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