

Your Ref:

Our Ref: International Law / Relations Committee: 21000325/88

2 May 2012

Mr Lim Chee Wee
President
Bar Council Malaysia
No 13 15 & 17 Leboh Pasar Besar
Kuala Lumpur 50050
MALAYSIA

By post and email to: president@malaysianbar.org.my

Dear President

CONCERN ABOUT POLICE RESPONSE DURING BERSIH 3.0 RALLY

Queensland Law Society extends its support to you regarding your organisation's statement on the police response during the 3.0 BERSIH rally held on 28 April 2012. Our International Law and Relations Committee were informed through our Queensland Law Society Council's contacts with LAWASIA and their Secretary General/Chief Executive Officer, Ms Janet Neville.

The Society is deeply concerned with the measures we understand were taken by police, including the indiscriminate discharging of multiple rounds of tear gas without any obvious provocation, and the lack of restraint and proportionality in the conduct of the police actions. It is troublesome that there have now been several reports of public rallies in which these same forceful responses have been employed by the police. As we have expressed to you previously, we remain concerned with the broad powers given to police without proper safeguards to protect the public against misuse under the *Peaceful Assembly Act 2012*.

The reports of the lack of cooperation with the Bar Council's monitoring teams are also disturbing. We applaud the important role that monitoring teams play in observing these assemblies to ensure the rights of individuals are safeguarded and that the correct legal processes are upheld. Monitoring teams put their own safety at risk in order to carry out this role in the interest of protecting the public.

We offer our support to you and echo your sentiment that the enjoyment of democratic rights comes at the cost of constant vigilance. The Society would be pleased to assist you in any way it can.

Yours faithfully

Dr John de Groot
President