

Bersih welcomes Umno Youth rally
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The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih) welcomes Umno Youth's decision to hold another huge rally to coincide with the Bersih 2.0 movement's gathering on July 9.

Its steering committee member Maria Chin Abdullah (right) said that they will not stop the Umno Youth gathering as it is every individual's right to assemble.

"We will not try to halt them. They have the right to gather, and so do we," said Maria.

"We respect each other's rights. Whether they want to assemble or walk, it's up to them," she said.

Just like Bersih, Umno Youth plans to march to the Istana Negara at the same time.

"We are supporting the present electoral system and want to work with the (Election Commission) to improve it further," Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar told Malaysiakini yesterday.

Khairy said that among others, Umno Youth was concerned about allegations that opposition parties are "transferring voters".

Malay rights group Perkasa also vowed to organise a rally to counter Bersih's, at the same time and place.

'The groups' aims are the same'

Asked if Bersih finds the Umno wing's initiative an act of provocation, Maria said, "Our gathering will be peaceful. If there is any provocation, it is not going to come from us.

"We have never made any (provocative) statement and we are firmly against violence."

She explained that both groups "have the intention to do the same thing" when asked what Bersih would do if its gathering bumped into the Umno Youth rally.

Maria also said that Bersih would distribute 2,000 yellow T-shirts, starting Sunday, during the launch in Kuala Lumpur.

She said the T-shirts are priced at RM15 each and other relevant materials will also be distributed.

In addition to speeches by NGO representatives in support of Bersih 2.0, the event will also screen a short documentary on vote-buying during elections.

"We invite all political party representatives, regardless of whether they are in the opposition or the government, to support us," Maria added.