

'Death threat against Ambiga deplorable'
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Senior Pakatan Rakyat leaders today unanimously condemned the recent death threat against Bersih 2.0 chief S Ambiga, labeling the "deplorable act" a direct result of the government's alleged whitewashing of extremist behaviour.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (PKR-Permatang Pauh) said the death threat is a culmination of unbridled extremism that has been allowed to continue without fear of reprisal from the government.

"Extremists and racists are tolerated, and in some ways condoned. This is not the first time. I remember the threat on Nurul Izzah and her daughter and now against Ambiga," he said after chairing a Pakatan presidential council meeting at Parliament's tower block.

"This is not only unacceptable, it is deplorable. We are clearly disgusted...But what is worse is not just the purveyors of such acts, but the fact that the system seems to condone, allow and publicise this," said the PKR de-facto chief.

DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang said such a threat is outrageous, especially in the face of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's recent call for moderation and his ongoing 1Malaysia campaign that seeks to unite all Malaysians regardless of race or creed.

"Only yesterday the PM reiterated that his 1Malaysia call is not rhetoric. If it is not, he should show to all Malaysians the people first concept is really genuine, which means the government must facilitate the holding of the peaceful Bersih rally on July 9, instead of the Home Minister, police, together with other political leaders, making baseless threats," Lim (right) said.

"Open threats of assassination are developing as the latest form of extremism. The authorities have been closing their eyes to such extremism.

"If they have taken proper steps to ensure that moderates can have their rightful place in the country, and clamp down on such extremism, the country will not be in the sorry state that it is today," he said.

'Bersih and Umno Youth not like Perkasa'

Lim, who is also Ipoh Timur MP, said it was "most shocking" for Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to lump the Bersih rally organisers and Umno Youth together with Perkasa in issuing a warning against the protestors.

Unlike Bersih, which pledged to have a peaceful gathering, and Umno Youth, which he said is gathering for their own reasons, Perkasa and its president Ibrahim Ali have openly made "provocative, seditious and treasonous statements" against the rally.

"...To put the three groups on the same footing itself is an indication that the Home Minister does not understand the difference between what Bersih is trying to do and Perkasa's call for a counter protest which is full of threats of violence," Lim said.

Looking back to the time Hishammuddin's grandfather, Onn Jaafar, went across Malaya to gather the Malays and eventually form Umno, Lim said the drive would have failed if Hishammuddin had been in charge of homeland security during that period.

"I would like to ask Hishammuddin, if he treats Bersih in this way, would his grandfather be allowed to hold gatherings up and down Malaya, which led to the formation of Umno?"

"If Hishammuddin had been there, he would have put his grandfather in jail. He (Hishammuddin) just cannot

put Bersih on the same footing as Perkasa... that shows that they (government) are not putting people first," he said.

Precursor to Ops Lalang II?

PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar pointed out that the government's reaction to the planned Bersih 2.0 rally has echoes of Ops Lalang, a controversial mass operation in 1987 where more than 200 dissidents and opposition politicians were arrested by then-Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamed's administration.

While implying that society has changed since then, the Pokok Sena MP pointed out that letting the rally occur is more likely to work in the BN's favour.

"By allowing the rally to go on, maybe the people would be more willing to accept BN, instead of stopping it which will only further tarnish their own image," he said.

Lim, who with Mahfuz and several other senior opposition members was detained during Ops Lalang, agreed that the government's recent actions seem to indicate that things could turn for the worse.

"As a former Ops Lalang detainee, I want to ask the government; is this in preparation for Ops Lalang II?" he said.