

**Najib: Bersih ploy to stop BN 'momentum'**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak explained away the planned mammoth Bersih 2.0 rally as nothing more than an attempt to "wrest back political momentum from the BN".

"It has nothing to do with a memorandum to the Agong. It has nothing to do with allegedly crooked elections," alleged the PM.

"They resolved that if they want to stop us, this is how they can wrest back the political momentum," he told over 2,500 delegates attending the PPP annual general meeting in Kuala Lumpur today.

Najib who opened the BN component party's AGM, claimed that the opposition was trying to "reverse the trend" favouring BN in recent by-elections.

"We have won in most of the by-elections, we only lost one in Sibiu. But we won more. We also won in the Sarawak state election with more than two-thirds majority.

"Independent analysts also said that the government is on the right track with our transformation programmes," he said.

He argued it is because of this, that the opposition had to look for a way to win back the rakyat, and were using the planned electoral reform rally to swing the momentum their way.

The premier refuted Bersih's claims of electoral irregularities saying that if indeed BN is rigging the elections, they might as well make sure they win in all states and not allow Pakatan to win five states as in the last polls.

**'If you are man enough, contest'**

Najib also chided the rally's organisers on their choice of means to fight for the people, saying that street demonstrations was not the way.

"The power is in the hands of the rakyat, it is not in the streets (demonstrations)," sniped the BN chairperson.

He challenged those behind Bersih to instead go head to head with BN in what he claimed was a more suitable arena.

"If you are man enough, during the elections, you contest. If you don't have the guts, do your street demonstrations, but be prepared to face the consequences."

But he warned that BN and the government will not stay still in the face of activities that may cause havoc.

"We will fight it to the end, but not like gangsters, we use laws and in the proper way," Najib said in his fiery speech which drew applause.

In his welcome speech earlier, PPP president M Kayveas (right) also urged the government to take stern measures against the Bersih rally which he said was the wrong way to make perfectly sound demands.

"I support the the eight Bersih demands, but I do not support the way they choose to convey it," he said.

**Clean up**

While he did not name names, Najib also took a dig at PKR defacto leader Anwar Ibrahim whom he alluded as the brains behind Bersih.

"How can he become defacto leader, when he never contested at all in his own party? But before he wants to clean up our elections, he should clean up his party first.

"Look at what happen during their party elections, they say it is about reformasi, but it ended with baling kerusi ( chairs being thrown)," jibed Najib.

Najib also recounted how some PKR leaders like former federal minister Zaid Ibrahim who once supported the party, had left in disappointment, disheartened by its lack of direction.

The Bersih 2.0 rally is a follow up from the first demonstration in November 2007, which saw close to 40,000 people take to the streets of the federal capital to push the government and the Election Commission (EC) to implement electoral reforms.

The proposed July 9 rally while receiving the support of civil society and the opposition, has been criticised by the BN-led federal government and police who have promised stern action against those taking part in what they already declared as an illegal gathering.

### **Crackdowns Najib's 'failure' as PM**

Meanwhile, Bersih 2.0 has responded to the PM's speech saying they were "deeply saddened and disappointed by Najib Razak's declaration that supporters of the Bersih 2.0 rally are to be held responsible should chaos ensue on July 9".

In a statement this evening, its executive director Maria Chin Abdullah said it was a prime minister's "first and foremost duty" to protect the welfare and human rights of all Malaysians.

She reminded the PM that civil society had not once been responsible for a peaceful gathering turning out otherwise.

Furthermore, said Abdullah, Bersih has consistently stated its commitment to "peaceful and principled activism" and that it abhorred violence of any form.

She blasted the PM for being a disappointment, having opted to shirk his duty to protect those who exercise their constitutional right and instead "misrepresent our intentions and wield the dark sceptre of unwarranted repressive 'consequences'".

The Bersih leader slammed Najib for suggesting Bersih had a political motive to topple BN reminding him that the coalition's goals were towards a free and fair electoral system for the rakyat and not any particular political party, adding that BN was welcome to join in the rally.

"Indeed, this is the perfect opportunity for the prime minister to demonstrate the progressive views he has espoused both at home and abroad.

"He can conclusively do so simply by allowing the July 9 rally to proceed unhindered and by directing all government agencies to cooperate fully with all involved to ensure that each and every Malaysian wishing to exercise their constitutional right may do so without any fear of clashes or chaos," she said.

She said as the "final authority in the government", crackdowns and abuse of power to silent the citizenry constitutes "the failure of the prime minister to live up to their promises and the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Malaysian people".

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