

**Bersih rally: Najib can find solution acceptable to all**  
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As a Malaysian and a senior citizen, I have, like most Malaysians, become gravely concerned with the escalating unhealthy developments and rising public anxiety over the impending demonstrations on July 2.

What is at stake are our basic human rights and the need to uphold our constitution, with regard to our essential freedom of assembly and speech.

Malaysians now keep asking why it is so difficult for the powers that be, to agree to give permits for peaceful marches from any quarter, to ask for free and fair elections.

While it is true that we enjoy higher standards of democracy and electoral practices than many less mature democracies, we have to honestly admit that our electoral system is not the best and actually leaves much to be desired and improved.

After all why can't we seek to transform the electoral system to become more efficient and to serve the rakyat better, with the concept of People First and Performance Now?

How can we move more purposefully to achieve our Vision 2020 goals, to become a developed country, with all its wider prerequisites, if we cannot have even peaceful marches to protest against any abuses in our electoral system ?

Even if the police cannot change their mindsets and provide permits to have the peaceful assemblies and marches.

I ask whether they could give the public some fraternal and friendly assurances that they could allow demonstrators to walk peacefully, if the demonstrators undertake to help the police maintain law and Order and even cooperate to apprehend any trouble makers ?

I don't think it's beyond our innovative capacity and our ingenuity, nor is it too late, for the police and the leaders of the demonstrations to work out some acceptable modus operandi ?

Together and in the spirit of national unity we can have a Malaysian consensus, to ensure that the demonstrations can be allowed, but with the full agreement for all to exercise restraint, moderation and patience on all sides?

In any case the electoral demands are fair and reasonable.

I don't think the Government can be against the requests for instance for - clean electoral roles, the reform of postal votes, the use of Indelible Ink, minimum 21 days for campaigning, free and fair access to the media, strengthening the enforcement of electoral rule, the eradication of vote buying and the rejection of "dirty politics".

In fact the rising tensions are quite unnecessary. We are making a mountain of a mole hill. There is too much over-reaction which can lead to ugly outcomes.

Indeed we cannot risk mismanagement of this sensitive situation.

Hence I would humbly appeal to our Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to step into this breach and impasse immediately.

He can meet with the leaders of all three groups that plan to demonstrate, to dialogue and negotiate some consensus that could allow the freedom of assembly, with peace and goodwill on all sides.

The prime minister could also address some of the serious grievances raised by the three groups, immediately and/or on a planned basis, within a reasonable time frame.

We appeal to the prime minister to use his good offices and all parties concerned to show the Malaysian spirit to resolve the differences with peace and goodwill, in the public and national interests, please.

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