

Bersih seeks audience with Agong, may put off rally
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The Bersih 2.0 rally scheduled for July 9 hinges on the outcome of the audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong that the movement's leaders are seeking.

Bersih 2.0 chief Ambiga Sreenevasan (left) said the movement, which is a coalition of more than 60 NGOs, will submit a request for the audience later today.

"We want to communicate our decision to His Majesty and then we will announce (our decision)," Ambiga told a press conference today.

She said that for now, the Bersih 2.0 steering committee, which met at an emergency meeting last night, had decided that it would "abide" by the Agong's statement issued late yesterday evening.

However, she refused to divulge details on the committee's decision until an audience with the Agong has taken place.

Ambiga said the coalition welcomed the Agong's statement, calling it a timely and necessary "intervention" in the face of increasingly violent threats issued by Bersih 2.0's opponents.

Pressed by reporters, Ambiga was evasive on what she meant by "abide", repeatedly stating that it was only fair to discuss the matter with the Agong first before going public with the decision.

Asked if they would call off the rally if the Agong advised them to do so, she curtly said, "Yes".

She was then asked again on this but she deflected the topic, saying that any decision would only be made after the audience with the Agong.

At this point, one of the secretariat members chimed in to "advise" the media not to pre-empt the issue before the audience.

'We'll take it a day at a time'

Ambiga said they hoped to secure an audience with the Agong before Saturday, but was again evasive when asked whether or not they would take to the streets if the meeting did not take place by then.

She said that, while they would like to meet the Agong as soon as possible, it was entirely the King's prerogative, and declined to say more.

"We will take it one day at a time. We will make an announcement when the time comes," she said.

Ambiga also said Bersih 2.0 was deeply grateful for the Agong's support for their cause in seeking electoral reform, stressing again that his statement was timely.

She said Bersih 2.0's supporters have suffered countless injustice, particularly over the past month, from actions by parties unrelated to the coalition and allegedly aimed at discrediting the movement.

"We are a peaceful movement and want to communicate our views in a peaceful manner," she said.