

July 9 - the day when the people rise up
Malaysiakini.com
July 7, 2011

COMMENT That's it! Bersih finally has had enough of the treacherous conduct of a shameless government which has lost all sense of decency!

In a firmly worded statement released late last night, Bersih effectively said "come what may, we will have our rally at the Stadium Merdeka on July 9 at 2pm!".

This is Bersih's final answer to a battery of ridiculous obstructions, warnings and excuses put up by the Najib government to obstruct a Bersih rally in the stadium.

This is despite Bersih having made a major concession to shift the rally from the streets to a stadium under the unprecedented intervention of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and after Prime Minister Najib Razak's offer of a suitable stadium for the purpose.

And the 360 degree turn by Najib and his government happened within a day!

Impasse resolved?

It was only on Tuesday (July 5) afternoon that Bersih had an audience with the Agong during which it accepted the government's NONERally-in-stadium offer to resolve the tense impasse between Bersih and the Najib government, during which an obviously panic-stricken government went on a rampage of wanton arrests to deter an anticipated massive street rally.

Upon Bersih's announcement to stay off the streets, Najib immediately expressed readiness to meet Bersih over a suitable stadium for the purpose.

The next day, Wednesday July 6, Bersih indicated it wanted the event to be held at Stadium Merdeka due to its historical significance and central location.

Bersih further said that it had ascertained the stadium's availability johor dap arrested by police bersih 030711 06on July 9, as a scheduled concert had been cancelled.

But Umno Youth immediately said: "We reject Stadium Merdeka for Bersih. It is not a place for political gatherings. Do it in a Pakatan Rakyat controlled state."

This was followed by the stadium management's rejection of Bersih on the blatantly false excuses of "internal management sports event" and "renovation".

What did the prime minister, who had earlier suggested and agreed to the rally-in-stadium proposal, have to say about the rally in Stadium Merdeka?

He said it was up to the authorities in charge of such matters to act in accordance with requirements of security and safety.

He emphasised, however, that "permission would only be given to organisations that are registered, but Bersih has never been registered, it is an illegal organisation".

He gave no indication whether approval to use the stadium would be forthcoming.

Then, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, who had earlier declared Bersih illegal, made the shocking and puzzling announcement that kedah pkr arrested by police bersih 020711 01Bersih is still illegal, despite the impasse being resolved in accordance with the wishes of the prime minister, mediated by His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Hishammuddin said: "They are still banned. Nobody can put themselves over the law. Just because Tuanku met them, doesn't mean they are no longer illegal".

However, despite the alleged illegality, Hishammuddin made the curious statement that Bersih could still apply to the police for a permit to hold the rally, but gave no assurance that a permit would be given.

Bersih is betrayed

Finally, Bersih's door to a stadium rally in Kuala Lumpur was shut when Information and Culture Minister Rais Yatim announced that the Cabinet has decided to bar Bersih from holding its rally in any of the stadiums in the Kuala Lumpur area.

Rais suggested that Bersih could hold its rally in a Pakatan -controlled state.

Meanwhile, the police crackdown on Bersih supporters continues unabated, arresting any one seen wearing a yellow shirt or any paraphernalia linked to Bersih.

So far, there have been more than two hundred arrests, including members of parliament and state legislative assemblymen.

Some are being charged in court, and some are detained under the draconian Emergency Ordinance which provides for indefinite detention without trial, which has been traditionally used against vice criminals.

Ministers and police have warned that even when a stadium rally is approved, anyone wearing anything suggesting support for Bersih including the yellow T shirts will be arrested.

So, Bersih was played out!

It gave up the street rally out of respect for His Majesty and in compliance with the PM's wishes; but in return, it was denied a stadium for rally, and its supporters continue to be hunted down and persecuted like criminals through massive abuse of police power under fallacious legality.

Hishammuddin claimed that Bersih is illegal because it is not registered with the Registrar of Society, and hence any article or any activities promoting Bersih is also illegal, hence the mass arrest.

But this is pure legal nonsense.

Bersih is a temporary and loose grouping of registered NGOs (62 in at this moment) which have come together for the specific task of pursuing electoral reforms.

If these NGOs are by themselves legally registered bodies, how can they become illegal just because they have joined forces to pursue a transient objective?

If Bersih is decreed illegal, then all the NGOs in this group must also be deemed illegal. So are the members that belong to these respective NGOs.

By extension, any grouping of registered bodies who have joined forces to pursue any joint objective must also be considered illegal, including the opposition alliance of Pakatan Rakyat, which consists of PKR, PAS & DAP.

Why hasn't Hishammuddin banned Pakatan Rakyat, and decreed their joint pursuits as also illegal?

Can Hishammuddin explain the strangest logic ever known - as reflected in the police arresting individuals bearing symbols of Bersih, when the organisation itself was sanctioned by the PM through the

offer of a stadium to conduct its function?

Isn't the entire Barisan Nasional government - PM, cabinet, police and judiciary - making a fool of themselves by crucifying and persecuting a well-meaning civil society movement on the premise of a fictitious law?

Greatest disrespect to Agong

By insisting that Bersih is an outlaw, after it has reached a settlement with the PM under the auspices of His Majesty, hasn't Hishammuddin shown the greatest disrespect to the two highest leaders of the country?

And hasn't PM in turn made a mockery of His Majesty's gracious NONEffort to bring reconciliation and good sense by failing to keep his end of the bargain to allow Bersih to hold its rally in peace?

In the midst of such treasonous conduct from our leaders, we wish to congratulate Bersih for its courage and determination to do what is right. In its statement signed by all the 14 members of its steering committee last night, it said:

"As members of civil society that are committed to principles of integrity, we fully intend to abide by the advice of Tuanku DYMM SPB YDP Agong and hold our gathering in a stadium to state our demand for clean and fair elections.

"Whether or not the government abides by their principles, we, the Malaysian people, will always uphold ours. Our determination to exercise our constitutional right to gather peacefully for a just and reasonable cause is unwavering."

Now that Bersih has conducted itself with honour, we the people must respond likewise.

It is about time that we stand up to reclaim what is due to us - our liberty and dignity and our right to determine our future, as enshrined in the Constitution.

Let everyone come out wearing yellow, and let the traitors be swarmed and drowned by a sea of yellow in Kuala Lumpur on that day.

Let July 9 be remembered in generations to come as the day when Malaysians finally rose up to reclaim their motherland from the grip of a tyrannical power.

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