

Thanks to Najib, I will join the Bersih rally tomorrow
Malaysiakini.com
July 8, 2011

I live in Petaling Jaya. I have a well paying job at a private consulting firm. I spend weekends either shopping or working on my garden. I am middle class. I am Chinese.

Like most middle class Chinese, I care deeply about our country; I keep up with the latest news, and have a strong personal opinion on national politics. Like many middle class Chinese, I have never joined a demonstration of any kind before, and my contributions to civil society have never moved beyond the discourse at the dinner table or roadside mamak stall.

With regards to election issues, like many of you, I am familiar with the complaints. I too watched YouTube videos of Najib trying to cut a "deal" with the people of Sibul, the long BN advertisements passed off as news broadcasts on every local station, gerrymandering, phantom voters and so forth, but not for one moment did I believe that I could or should do anything about it.

It's just that there has always been a line between talking about things, and getting up and actually doing something. You could say that this line made up of two things: 1) my family leads a comfortable life, so why bother; and 2) safety comes first, so why risk getting caught and locked up under the terrifying ISA?

These lines are all but dust now. I will walk tomorrow. Not because of Bersih 2.0, but because of the reactions of the ruling government. The waffling, the double speak, the nonsensical reasoning by various cabinet ministers are fine, and only to be expected.

The over-reacting, the double standards, the dubious interpretation of laws (and nonsensical reasoning) by the police is also fine (so what else is new)? And who cares what crap comes out of Ibrahim Ali's mouth?

What I cannot take lying down (or watching TV at home) is Najib's vile actions in response to Bersih 2.0. I know he plays dirty (Perak takeover, Saiful Bukhari and the Anwar sodomy trial, etc.) and am aware that he was a formidable firebrand during his Umno Youth days.

But I could close one eye to those things. After all, isn't politics a dirty game? And anyway, 1Malaysia did seem like a well meaning idea. And the ETP did look an effective shortcut to spur the economy.

But once he resorted to flaming racial hatred by calling S Ambiga an enemy of Islam, and by encouraging silat exponents to rise against fellow Malaysians (how about appointing bomohs as the fourth line of defence?), he lost all respect in my eyes. Najib is no longer my prime minister.

I will be silent no longer. I will make my way to Stadium Merdeka tomorrow. I will pray that this is the beginning of a better Malaysia.