

**Marina ticks off gov't in its handling of Bersih**  
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Marina Mahathir, eldest daughter of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is convinced that the government had handled last Saturday's Bersih 2.0 rally "extremely badly".

"Many leaders, both in the public and private sectors, are saying the government could have avoided the Bersih 2.0 (fallout) by not making such a big issue out of it," Marina told Malaysiakini in an exclusive interview.

"The government could have simply dealt with it in a different way as the issue at hand is not that controversial. If you ask anyone, 'do you want free and fair elections?', the logical answer is 'yes' - no matter what side you are on.

"The government should have said, 'we are for it too'."

According to Marina, the government was in such an aggressive defensive mode over the Bersih movement that it made many Malaysians, including those who sat on the fence, angry.

On July 9, Marina participated in the Bersih 2.0 protest with her daughter and friends.

They started from near Jalan Pudu (Berjaya Times Square) and walked along Jalan Hang Jebat (formerly Davidson Road) in front of Stadium Negara towards the Olympics Council of Malaysia building where she encountered other friends.

"Apparently at one point, the cops had chased (the protesters) even though there was no reason to catch them and hauled them off.

"But later, we could sit and wait by the curb without anyone disturbing us. Jalan Hang Jebat and the small road that led up to Stadium Merdeka stayed pretty quiet."

**Did she tell her dad?**

Marina also ticked off Prime Minister Najib Razak for his personal attack against Bersih leader Ambiga Sreenevasan.

"People thought 'how could you stoop so low'," she continued.

"And when they started arresting people wearing yellow T-shirts and put (Sungai Siput MP) Dr (D) Jeyakumar in jail - he is such a good person and has done a lot of good service - people got more angry. It is not fair to accuse him of being a communist.

"I think a lot of ordinary people decided that this is it. This is it and this is not fair, and we are going to out there and participate in the Bersih 2.0 rally.

"There are so many accounts of the aunty types who would not ever do anything or something radical in their life or never march, and these people decided to go, even those from outside Kuala Lumpur," added Marina, who said she was at the Bersih rally for more than three hours.

When asked if she had talked to her father about the Bersih 2.0 campaign for electoral reforms, she categorically said, "No".

**Why?**

"Because we are both extremely busy people and I cannot even keep up with him. On July 9, he was

actually on a flight outside the country,” Marina explained.

“So I didn't tell him that I was marching. (But) we discuss all these things. He has his views, and we have respect for each other's views and that's it.”

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