

**HSBC denies stopping staff from attending Bersih  
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HSBC Bank Malaysia Bhd has denied issuing any memorandum to its employees prohibiting them from attending this Saturday's Bersih 3.0 rally.

In a statement yesterday evening, HSBC said its staff were free to do what they pleased in when they were off duty.

NONE"Employees acting on their own or through independent employee organisations are free to do so in their personal time," the statement says.

On Sunday blogger Zorro Unmasked posted a message asking if it was true that the bank had issued a internal memo threatening action against staff found to have attended the rally.

"Did HSBC send out an intra-bank message/memo warning their staff that they will lose their jobs if they are caught participating in Bersih 3.0. An available copy of the memo would add authenticity to this claim. Is there one?" asked the blogger.

The bank maintained that it is politically neutral, and would not condone any staff who contradicts the organisation's position.

"HSBC Bank Malaysia did not issue and has never issued any memo to employees regarding their participation in the demonstration for electoral reform, Bersih 2.0 or Bersih 3.0.

"HSBC maintains a position of political neutrality in all countries and territories in which it operates, and the bank does not condone any member of its staff making statements that are contradictory to its position..." it said.

NONEThe coalition for clean and fair elections Bersih is holding its Duduk Bantah or sit-in rally at Dataran Merdeka in protest after the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform failed to implement most of its eight demands.

No go in JB

In a related development, the Johor Bahru City Council (MBJB) has stood in the way of Bersih's intention to hold a simultaneous sit-in protest at Dataran Bandaraya Johor Bahru.

Mayor Burhan Amin said the decision not to allow the use of the square was made yesterday.

"The reason involves many factors - the area is owned by us, and we do not agree because it is not a big square, it's size is only as big as a field," he was quoted as saying by the Malay daily Sinar Harian.

"The MBJB branch office are also located there.... (they can) do it at the stadium or other venues."



