

**It's right, and our right, to take part in Bersih 3.0**  
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Human life consists of duties and responsibilities to be fulfilled and there comes a time for people to do what is necessary and right.

Bersih 3.0 is such a time.

It is a noble thing to right the wrongs and stand up for what is right even if you have to participate in a sit-in for your country.

So how come citizens are demonised when they try to make the governance of their country better?

The global trumpeting call by Bersih organisers to rally the rakyat together at Dataran Merdeka on April 28, at 2pm, is nothing more than a peaceful call to save the country's democracy by ensuring clean and fair elections.

It is a legitimate democratic act of protest in the face of the failure of the promised electoral reforms. The fault lies with those who reneged on their promises.

Revelations of voter registration irregularities and other anomalies cannot be ignored. They are like poison to the body. They will choke democracy and defraud the ballot box.

Bersih, as the people can see, is not a political movement but a rakyat's desperate patriotic cry to save their country's democracy and liberate their hijacked electoral system from political bondage and fraud.

And people support it on justifiable grounds.

Even housewives in Johor are coming out to save their country's ballot box from corruption. An Umno member and son of a former deputy prime minister has come out in support of it after deriding the dishonest citizenship-for-votes practices.

An eminent Malaysian poet and distinguished lawyer lead the movement. And thousands of Malaysians from all walks of life all over the world and more than 80 NGO's share the same concern.

It is not something that can be dismissed lightly.

In democracies governments defend the right of its citizens to hold public rallies and even attend them to defend their policies. The police appear to protect those present from traffic and other hazards.

But it is hard to defend dirty politics and unfair practices and irregularities.

Public squares or the people's places are the most appropriate venues for such gatherings especially when the cause is of public and national benefit like Bersih's.

If the chairperson of the Election Commission has such a strong and convincing case and can substantiate his denials of electoral system anomalies why would Bersih 3.0 take place?

Malaysians are reasonable and tolerant and do not voice their dissent in public rallies unless they have no choice.

Bersih leaders have been stonewalled and frustrated despite their reaching out to the authorities.

They may yet be the world's most patient protest group.

Burying the people's hopes in a committee is the surest way to stymie change. But common sense dictates when something is remiss it has to be fixed without delay or excuses.

A clean and fair election is a far cry from the handicapped race the opposition is forced to run against the incumbent government.

No fair-minded voter wants to see any political candidate from any political side unfairly disadvantaged.

State-owned media must be fairer and more balanced in presenting news on both sides of the political divide, not just make one side look good all the time against the facts.

Intelligent Malaysians must feel insulted to be taken for simpletons and forced to watch political propaganda as news.

Why have those legitimate grievances raised by Bersih 2.0 not been resolved?

These and others are tough questions the rakyat asks and only a happening like Bersih 3.0 can reinforce and articulate the rakyat's concerns.

At the heart of the problem is an electoral system that the rakyat can no longer trust to produce clean and fair elections.

What is more at stake is the election of a clean and fair government. Bersih 3.0 is not the end in itself but the means to an end.

But can any dirty and unfair electoral system produce a clean and fair government?

It is because the chairperson of the Election Commission believes in the urban legend of Malaysia's electoral roll as the 'cleanest in the world' that is worrying and Bersih 3.0 is needed to awake him to the reality.

No leader can survive on lies ad infinitum.

No nation can survive let alone progress with corruption as part and parcel of its modus operandi and political culture. And no political party that is corrupt deserves to be in government.

If a politician thinks he is that popular then let the people's votes prove it.

But let the weighing scales be honest and let the politicians be weighed by their deeds.

Surely Malaysians don't want their democracy to be hijacked by a doubtful electoral process and get a government elected by cheating and fraud.

If anyone is serious about clean and fair elections and clean and fair governance then let the nation listen to what Bersih 3.0 has to say and detoxify the electoral system.

The voice of Bersih is the collective voice of the rakyat because its cause is of the people, by the people and for the people.

Why is the government so against Bersih 3.0? And against so many of the people? Why is the government against what is right?

"Courage is not the absence of fear but the strength to do what is right in the face of it," wrote J. Johnson

and Malaysians who love their country need to find the courage to do what is right.

Cowardice only postpones one's sufferings to the next generation, your children and children's children.

Burmas's Aung Sun Su Kyi was afraid but stood steadfast against her foes, she once divulged in a biography. Today she is the country's national hero.

Malaysians need to redeem their country and they can only do it when what is right rises above what is wrong.

It is not about politics. It is about knowing the difference between right and wrong, truth and lies, good and bad governance.

And if citizens and governments can't tell the difference it is one more reason why Bersih 3.0 is needed and why every citizen who believes in clean and fair elections and clean and fair governance, must show their support and put their hand to the plough.

What counts in the end is that you vote for the political party that will give you the governance you deserve and who wants bad governance?

You will have no choice until you are sure your vote counts because the ballot box is clean and not riddled with corrupt practices and fraud.

That is why Bersih 3.0 counts so fulfill your moral and patriotic duty while you can.

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