

## **Marina Mahathir yet to decide on Bersih 3.0**

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**By S Pathmawathy**

Marina Mahathir has yet to decide on whether to attend Bersih 3.0 sit-in at Dataran Merdeka this Saturday, adding that she will make up her mind at the eleventh hour.

The renowned social activist said "I like to hold my cards close" when asked if she would take part in the third chapter of Bersih, the coalition of NGOs for clean and fair elections.

On July 9 last year, Marina along with several friends and her daughter joined Bersih 2.0 despite repeated warnings from authorities that the rally was "illegal" as it was denied a permit to assemble at Stadium Merdeka.

ambiga question by police over seksualiti merdeka 071111 marina mahathirHowever, Marina (right in photo) had a fairly unperturbed journey to Kuala Lumpur and joined a crowd in front of Stadium Negara while waiting for the rest of the participants to make their way to the Stadium Merdeka nearby.

In an interview with Malaysiakini after the rally, she hit out at the government clampdown, saying that it was handled "extremely badly" as more than 1,600 protesters were arrested for "disturbing the peace" and taking part in an "illegal gathering".

During Bersih 2.0, the government had instructed the organisers to hold the rally in a stadium, but refused to offer any venue in Kuala Lumpur for the purpose.

The organisers, however, insisted the rally be held at Stadium Merdeka. But with the venue being sealed off, about 50,000 supporters flooded the city's streets instead.

Complete overhaul of electoral system

The sit-in at Dataran Merdeka this Saturday was decided upon after the coalition of NGOs found the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform failing to act on key problems it had raised, including a complete overhaul of the election system and the electoral database.

The planned sit-in hits a snag as the Kuala Lumpur City Hall, which maintains the iconic public field, has refused to let Bersih use the venue.

The police also turned down the organisers' appeal to help control the traffic flow in the city although the home minister has stressed that the rally is not a security threat.

The government has since offered four alternative venues, but this was rejected by Bersih.



