

Hijau backers 'will make it' with or without buses

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By Koh Jun Lin

Despite all 18 buses pulling out from ferrying Himpunan Hijau supporters to Kuala Lumpur, the coalition president Wong Tack said they will not be deterred, and the steering committee is now urging Kuantan residents to carpool.

“That is a minor issue; people will make their way here no matter what. Kuantan is not too far,” he said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

NONEWong (left) had previously said eight tour buses have withdrawn from the Kuantan-Kuala Lumpur trip, and accused the Tourism Ministry of harassing the bus operators.

The ministry’s secretary-general Ong Hong Peng had denied the claim yesterday, saying that it has no jurisdiction to do so.

Today, Himpunan Hijau committee member Lee Chin Chen told Malaysiakini that another 10 private buses had pulled out last night, as they could not obtain a permit from the Land Public Transport Commission for the trip.

Left without any more buses, he said the committee had urged Kuantan residents to gather at Stadium Makmur in Kuantan and carpool to Kuala Lumpur at 11.30pm on Friday - on the eve of the rally.

“I urge people to join and not be deterred by this minor setback.

“I am disappointed with the government’s attempt to suppress the rally.

“Although Home Minister Hishamuddin Hussein had admitted that it is not a security threat, we now face indirect attacks from the government and this will affect its image,” he said when contacted.

LeeNONE (right) added that 15 private cars have been pledged for the carpool initiative so far.

When asked about the possibility of a crackdown, Wong said he believes that Kuala Lumpur mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail was ordered to take a tough stance against Bersih 3.0 and Himpunan Hijau’s rallies, but will respect the right to assemble anyway.

“I don’t know him personally, but looking at his expression (I think) he is a very kind person. So I feel sorry for him at this moment.

“But whatever tough line he puts up - unwillingly I suppose - the people have decided.

“The steering committee of Bersih and Himpunan Hijau have decided that there will be no more compromise, no more confusion. Dataran Merdeka will be the place. We will be there.” he said.

The group intends to gather at Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) by 11am on Saturday, then depart for Dataran Merdeka at noon to join the Bersih rally.

A peaceful and orderly walk

When pointed out by reporters that this may violate the Peaceful Assembly Act’s prohibition of protest marches, Wong denied that it was a march but just a “peaceful, orderly” walk.

He said this is the best way for the anti-Lynas protesters to reach Dataran Merdeka, as the existing LRT system cannot accommodate the crowd, which he expects to be between 30,000 and 40,000 persons.

However, he said if there are “thousand of buses” to ferry the participants from KLCC to Dataran Merdeka, the participants will willingly board the buses.

NONEAt the press conference, steering committee member Bang Seet Ping also condemned Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak’s inaction over their calls for the Lynas temporary operating licence (TOL) to be revoked.

She said this is within the prime minister’s power and is a matter of righting the wrongs of a government agency, namely the Atomic Energy Licensing Board.

“We are now convinced that we can no longer depend on our leader and this non-functioning administration. Only the people’s power can bring down Lynas and this irresponsible regime,” she said, reiterating Himpunan Hijau’s support for Bersih 3.0.

Wong denied that Himpunan Hijau had offered to back out from Bersih 3.0, but strongly supported it.

He said Himpunan Hijau had offered to call off its own rally yesterday if Najib cancels the TOL in order to create opportunities to resolve issues, but the group remains steadfast in its solidarity with Bersih.

However, he said it is now too late, and the prime minister should not have taken so long to make the “simple decision”.

