

Bersih 3.0 'now a security issue', says KL mayor
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By Nigel Aw

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has passed the buck to the police, saying that Bersih's insistence on holding its rally at the historic Dataran Merdeka has "become a security issue".

NONEKL mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail (left) said today this meant the police should intervene to assist DBKL to uphold the law.

"Now it appears there is a confrontation between what they (Bersih) want and what is not permitted by law, between those who want to rally and outsiders who are opposed to it.

"I can say that there is now an element of security," Ahmad Fuad said at the DBKL headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

In light of this, Ahmad Fuad said he will be meeting with Kuala Lumpur police chief Mohamad Salleh later today to determine their course of action in a joint operation.

'DBKL to police: You know what to do'

"When there is a security issue, it is under the jurisdiction of the police and the police must assist DBKL.

"Even though from the statements the police have issued... I believe that the police are always ready (to assist us)," he said.

In contrast to the previous Bersih rally on July 9 last year, the police have adopted a hands-off approach.

Admitting that DBKL's manpower was limited, he added that the police should know what has to be done.

"If the police provide us with large manpower, then perhaps we will not even require DBKL officers, but if the police tell us to handle it ourselves... then we will see how large the crowd is on that day," he said.

Ahmad Fuad added that at a meeting with Bersih leaders on April 25, the group had made clear to him if Dataran Merdeka was prohibited the venue as their rally site, they would sit on the roads.

'Street sit-in is not peaceful protest'

"If they sit on the roads then it is no longer a peaceful rally, how can they guarantee that nothing unfortunate will happen?" he said.

He also criticised Bersih for rejecting the alternative venue of Stadium Merdeka offered to them on the grounds that there would not be enough time to inform protesters.

"If they cannot even inform their supporters, how are they going to control the large crowd that they claim will come to Kuala Lumpur tomorrow?" he said.

Asked about the possibility of confrontation with Bersih supporters tomorrow, Ahmad Fuad said DAP vice-chairperson Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim's statement that the rally would bring more bad than good would rightly reflect the situation.

"I don't want to comment but from what Tunku Abdul Aziz said, it is a scenario that could happen," he said.

Tunku Abdul Aziz had yesterday broke ranks with party members, expressing concern that the Bersih demonstration may lead to chaos.

Ahmad Fuad added that as of now, there are no plans to close any roads but if it were to be done, the likely ones to be affected would be Jalan Raja, Jalan Tun Perak, Jalan Hishammuddin and Jalan Lebuhr Pasar.

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