

400 Malaysians gather in HK for Bersih 3.0

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An estimated 400 Malaysians gathered in Hong Kong yesterday as part of the Bersih 3.0 rally to voice their demands for electoral reform.

bersih 3.0 in hong kong police The peaceful protest received the full cooperation of the Hong Kong Police Force, who had to deploy additional officers to manage the crowd that was four times larger than the officially permitted size.

The crowd gathered outside Sogo Shopping Mall in Causeway Bay at 2pm, singing patriotic songs like 'Negaraku' and 'Sejahtera Malaysia'.

Protesters came from as far as Guangdong Province in mainland China, although the bulk consisted of Hong Kong-based Malaysians. Some tourists from Malaysia even timed their visit to Hong Kong to spend 428 here.

They had all heard about the event through Facebook and spread the word.

Organisers read out the eight demands of Bersih, speaking to the crowd in Mandarin, English and Malay. Protesters from mainland China wore yellow Bersih 3.0 T-shirts with "Malaysian in China" printed at the back.

"We want to vote from overseas!" a voice shouted from the crowd, eliciting a roar of approval from the crowd, who repeated the demand.

"I want to tell you that we are in Hong Kong and want to show you a difference. Look behind here. We have Hong Kong policemen helping us to organise a demonstration," a passionate protester came forward to say on the megaphone.

bersih 3.0 in hong kong police 2 The crowd chanted "M goi, ah sir! (Thank you, Mr Policeman)" to show their gratitude.

At approximately 3pm, while the Malaysian police fired tear gas on Bersih protesters in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the Hong Kong police guided the crowd on their march to the Malaysian Consulate-General in Wan Chai, stopping traffic at various points to allow protesters to pass.

The yellow-clad crowd continued their chants of "Bersih" and "Hidup Rakyat" as they walked the 30-minute route.

At the front entrance of the consulate, the crowd again sang the national anthem and waved their Malaysian flags while organisers read out the demands of Bersih.

When their requests evoked no response from the consulate, whose doors were locked, the crowd began to shout "Buka pintu!" repeatedly.

After a few minutes, the doors were finally opened and their petition was submitted, generating cheers of joy from the crowd.

'Fantastic turnout'

"Today's turnout is fantastic," the main organiser of the Hong Kong Bersih 3.0 said, who herself has been

away from Malaysian for 14 years.

NONE "If you look around the crowd today, people have brought their kids. In Malaysia, you would not get that. It's a sign of (the state of) things back home."

Bersih organisers have received two warnings from the Hong Kong Police Department due to permit-related issues as their crowd size has far exceeded the estimated number. This has been the case for both Bersih 2.0 and 3.0.

"If we have a Bersih 4.0 next year, the attendance will be even higher," she said with a smile.

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