

BN's Dertaran Merdeka
MalaysiaKini.com
May 01, 2012
By Dean Johns

BN's attempt to thwart the Bersih 3.0 rally by transforming the people's Dataran into its own 'Dertaran' with razor wire, barricades and battalions of police was a monstrous mockery of the meaning of Merdeka.

And this was the clearest sign yet of how terrified the regime is that clean and fair elections would spell an end to its corrupt and kotor rule of the country.

Yet Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his accomplices in crime and grime are still spouting all their usual filthy lies.

najib in penang usm dialogue 220412Najib (left) attempted to justify the government's obtaining a court order to ban protestors from Dataran Merdeka by claiming that there were "secret plans for a long-term occupation" of the area, and adding that "aside from its being a historical and iconic site in the context of the country's independence, we dispute the motives of the organisers because there were quarters who would use it for political purposes."

Accusing opponents of playing politics is, of course, a traditional ploy by BN, which itself plays nothing but politics, and dirty politics at that, and indeed routinely progresses beyond the political to the patently, blatantly criminal.

Riding roughshod over both the spirit and letter of electoral legislation to ensure that the 'democratic' process is as biased in its own favour as possible.

Electorates are so shamelessly gerrymandered in the government's favour that, far from being approximately equal in voter numbers as they should be, many are 10 or even 20 times the size of others.

The electoral rolls are so riddled with errors, multiple registrations and mysterious amendments and additions that they're clearly not worth the paper they're printed on.

Massive joke

Speaking of printing, the press and other 'mainstream' media are, as pretty well everyone knows by now, nothing but propaganda organs for BN.

And the electoral process itself is so rife with illicit practices ranging from the massive manipulation of postal votes to outright bribery that it's an absolute joke.

In fact it is arguable that BN has stolen every election it has ever 'won', and yet this crooked coalition has also had the arrogance to steal the scales of justice for its symbol and now to occupy Dataran Merdeka as its own.

NONENo wonder, then, that the beneficiaries of such a fraudulent state of affairs are terrified of Bersih.

This non-partisan organisation advocating clean and fair elections attracted so many Malaysians to rally in support of its cause back in July 2011 that the BN government was panicked into promising reforms.

But almost 12 months and a parliamentary select committee later, precious few if any reforms have emerged.

Electorates remain as gruesomely gerrymandered as ever, the electoral rolls remain a disgrace, and the

heads of the allegedly 'independent' electoral commission have been revealed as members of the dominant party in the BN coalition, Umno.

So it is hardly surprising that, despite Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's dismissal of the Bersih 3.0 rally as having "little traction" with the public, it brought people out to protest in unprecedented numbers, around Malaysia and much of the world.

And entirely to the credit of Bersih 3.0 organisers and the huge crowd in KL, despite BN's denial of their citizens' rights to congregate in Dataran Merdeka, they came in peace.

They weren't permitted to depart in peace, however, as when the crowd was already dispersing the police attacked them with tear gas and water cannons, thus giving BN a pretext for declaring the event dangerously violent.

'Police were victims'

Despite a wealth of video evidence of police violence against protestors, reporters and photographers, Prime Minister Najib Razak predictably portrayed the police as victims, lamenting that "certain quarters were trying to influence public opinion through the recounting of stories of arrest and police brutality, be they truth or half-truth, on social media and the internet."

NONE For his part, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein claimed that police seizures of cameras and seizure and memory sticks was "standard operating procedure", only to have this falsehood flatly contradicted by inspector-general of police Ismail Omar.

Information, Communications and Culture Minister Rais Yatim (left) described the Bersih rally as "dirty", claiming that participants "did not show respect for positive and noble values" and that the movement's leaders "bring hardship to the public, raise conflicting values and do not respect religious principles."

And former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad declared that Bersih's covert aim was not a clean and fair election system, but the overthrow of the government.

But as deceitful and self-serving as BN big-wigs were, the ever-servile 'mainstream' media easily outdid them, with the New Straits Times departing so far from the truth as to describe the rally as "a day of shame" consisting of "five hours of violence and madness that crippled the city" and resulting in "vandalism and total chaos."

As to where individual journalists stand, the picture is somewhat confusing. Those working for respectable media like Malaysiakini, which was hit by the usual distributed denial of service (DDOS) attack for the duration of the Bersih 3.0 weekend, were properly outraged by police attacks on them and their colleagues.

But apparently the police also, whether by accident or design, targeted the staff of some traditionally BN-friendly publications, thus earning themselves the ire of the customarily tame National Union of Journalists (NUJ).

In this regard, I was at first elated to see a Malaysiakini story headed "Editors, journalists slam police violence against media", but then disappointed but far from surprised to see very few, if any, 'mainstream' signatories to the online petition it contained.

Thus dashing any hopes that I or any of us might have had that BN's captive media might be about to clean-up their acts any time soon.

But even these worms will eventually turn, I guess, when sufficient Malaysians are so disgusted by BN's Dataran Merdeka exercise and similar future atrocities that the regime can't possibly win another election, even with all the corrupt and kotor tricks at its command.

Meanwhile, here's hidup to Bersih in its fight for clean and fair elections, hidup to clean and fair journalism and its fight for truth, and hidup to the millions of people passionately devoted to reclaiming ownership of the Dataran and the rest of Malaysia in the true spirit of Merdeka.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/196612>

