

'Pakatan didn't seek free pass via Bersih 3.0'

MalaysiaKini.com

May 07, 2012

By Aidila Razak

PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar has debunked the prime minister's claim that the Bersih 3.0 rally was a move to topple the government, saying that it was markedly different from the Arab Spring uprisings in the Middle East.

He said the rally was to call for clean and fair elections so that the opposition and the government can slug it out at the polls, and not to force the ouster of Najib Abdul Razak.

"Najib is afraid of his own shadow. (Bersih 3.0 was) different than the demonstrations in Egypt, where the protesters asked for Hosni Mubarak to step down, so they could take over," he said today.

"In Malaysia, we never asked (Najib to step down). We don't want a free victory. We want to win or lose in a clean and fair election."

Najib had said the government had **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** that the demonstrators would set up a prolonged encampment at Dataran Merdeka.

The authorities have since claimed that Bersih 3.0 was a move to topple the BN-led federal government.

Asked why protesters were chanting "*tumbang BN*" (topple BN) if they were not out to topple the government, Mahfuz said this was because BN is allegedly cheating in the polls.

He added that the government continues with its scare tactics, now claiming that the Saudi government may ban pilgrims from Mecca after some protesters took photographs of themselves with Bersih T-shirts and banners there.

"The Saudi government is not as stupid as the Malaysian government. If Malaysian pilgrims are banned, the traders in Mecca would stage a protest as Malaysians are big shoppers and this would affect the traders' livelihoods," he quipped.

He was responding to a report by Umno-owned *Mingguan Malaysia* quoting unnamed sources as saying that the Saudi government is now mulling banning Malaysian pilgrims from Mecca.

A group of Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman traders had also staged a demonstration on Saturday saying that the Bersih 3.0 rally had caused them severe losses.