

'Coup claims use circular logic'

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The claim that the Bersih 3.0 rally was an attempt by the opposition to overthrow the government is based on circular reasoning and does not prove anything, according to DAP.

Only the police could have given Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak the "information" that the rally was a coup attempt - and now the police are investigating the matter because the allegation was made, DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang said.

"We have come full circle here - the prime minister alleging that Bersih 3.0 was an attempted coup d'etat against the government (which information could have only come from the police) and the police responding by announcing that the prime minister's allegation is being investigated," Lim said in a press statement today.

In addition, he called the prime minister "desperate" for roping in three former inspector-generals of police (IGPs) to bolster his claim despite lacking the evidence to prove it himself.

Lim was referring to the statement made yesterday by the three former IGPs, Haniff Omar, Abdul Rahim Mohd Noor and Musa Hassan (*right*), calling on the police to investigate Najib's claims.

This was followed by the current IGP Ismail Omar's announcement that the police would indeed probe the matter.

Criticising Najib for making a "baseless allegation", Lim said the prime minister should either furnish evidence to back up his claim or retract his statement and apologise.

"Najib must not be so irresponsible as prime minister of Malaysia.

"Can there be another episode to illustrate how reckless and irresponsible the prime minister could descend to... greatly dishonouring the reputation and professionalism of police officers?" he asked.

'Najib losing public relations war'

Lim described the allegation as Najib "upping the ante" because he had realised that he was losing the public relations war over the government's handling of the Bersih 3.0 rally.

He cited the "recycling" of an article by *The Economist* in the local media, which declares the rally a "score-draw" for both sides rather than provoking a backlash against only the government.

The DAP stalwart added that the *The Economist* article, published only three days after the rally, had proven that the prime minister had learnt how to better manage his administration's perception among the foreign media after last year's Bersih rally.

However, this improved perception had started to unravel as time passed, he said.

He described how the April 28 rally was an even greater public relations disaster for Najib than last year's rally, due to the emerging accounts of police brutality over the past week.

"Najib should realise that the public relations war, whether inside the country or internationally, over Bersih 3.0 cannot be won by more wild and scurrilous attacks on the Bersih organisers and Pakatan Rakyat leaders.

"He should either produce proof or retract and apologise for his wild allegation that the Bersih 3.0 'sit-in' was a coup attempt by the opposition to topple the government," Lim added.

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