

Islamic scholar cited to counter anti-demo fatwa

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By Aidila Razak

When it comes to observing the fatwa against street demonstrations, whose advise do you follow - that of the National Fatwa Council or influential Egyptian Islamic theologian Yusuf al Qaradawi?

PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim posed this question to a crowd of about 2,000 at Batu Caves last night, picking up on the [fatwa](#) issued after the Bersih 3.0 rally to forbid demonstrations which could lead to 'rioting or disturbances'.

Anwar cited Qaradawi's book on uprisings which takes note of the claim that demonstrations are not Islamic.

"In Chapter 1, he cites the Quranic verse which says that it is an obligation to work towards goodness," said Anwar, speaking at one of the first stops in Pakatan Rakyat's post-Bersih 3.0 nationwide roadshow.

"He concludes that to rise against an oppressive government is *harus*."

He said the scholar also notes that caliph Umar al Khattab, too, had engaged in a demonstration at a time when Islam was being practised and preached in secret.

Overjoyed, Umar had publicly announced his conversion to Islam and convinced the Prophet Muhammad to pray in public.

The following day all the Muslims emerged from the Arqam house, where early Muslims used to gather to learn more about their faith. In two lines and led by Umar, they proceeded towards the Kaabah.

Anwar said the National Fatwa Council's action mirrors that of the Egypt Fatwa Council, which had issued a similar decree during the demonstrations to bring down president Hosni Mubarak.

"The fatwa in Egypt during Mubarak's time was that it is forbidden to demonstrate to topple the Mubarak government..."

"(Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak) doesn't understand what happened in Egypt. He only knows that his friend was toppled," he quipped.

Mecca, too, 'would turn chaotic'

Among Pakatan leaders who spoke before Anwar was Selangor PAS commissioner Dr Abdul Rani Osman, who said he was in Egypt on April 28, the day of the Bersih 3.0 rally.

“The Egyptians were asking me what happened, and if you were criminals. When I told them what happened they said: ‘If tear gas was fired at pilgrims in Mecca, there would be chaos too’,” he said.

Prior to this, the crowd were shown emotive videos of the Bersih 3.0 rally, which depicted camaraderie among the protestors as well as alleged police violence against protestors.

Upping the ante, Gombak Setia PAS commissioner Salahuddin Nasir said he would lead a prayer session on Thursday night.

“We will pray for God's wrath (*laknat*) on the police personnel who had hearts like animals (during the rally), and (for) seven generations after them,” he said.

“Just wait and see in 40 days after that, if anything happens. Don't fool around with these things. But for officers with faith (who did not assault protestors), we will not ask for wrath to fall on you.”

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