

## **How BN lost this fencesitting voter: Open letter to PM**

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I am your average Joe in my late 40's, living a comfortable life in a quiet suburban part of KL. I call myself a political atheist with no particular inclination to any political party.

You can call me a fencesitter or a middle ground voter. In the last 20 years of my voting life, I have always voted based on issues, swinging my votes between BN and the opposition depending on the hot issues of the day.

I voted BN in 2004, giving your coalition a massive mandate post-Mahathir and the reverberating message of 'Change' espoused by your predecessor.

And when the message remained just a message, four years on, I voted for the opposition, and what followed is history.

I understand you are trying very hard to court people like me and I supposed all this alphabet in the soup monikers - *ETP*, *GTP*, *NEM*, etc. are part of your big strategy to win urban voters like me.

Honestly, I am not sure I am thoroughly convinced.

I will let you know why.

Deep down in my gut, I am not sure whether your message of transformation is real or not.

And even if you are sincere, I am not sure whether your party Umno is behind you or not. You see, Dato Seri, we bunch of urbanites are a whole lot of skeptics.

I am aware you are trying to change, modify or remove old archaic laws like OSA, Printing Press & Publication law, Assembly law, etc, in time for the general election.

All that seems good only on paper. Yes, some part of the draconian laws are repealed but they are half measures at best.

Worse, the new revised laws are harsher with many punitive clauses opening the possibility for abuse.

You see, many of us are educated overseas or have worked outside the country - in short, we are fairly connected to what's happening around the world.

Through the internet and our network of friends around the world, we know about concepts like a free press, freedom of assembly, rule of law, etc - so giving the old furniture a shine on its veneer without removing the termite infested part, is not going to excite us very much.

So on Apr 28, I decided to walk for the first time for Bersih. I was never part of Bersih 1.0 and 2.0 as I was not clear what was the message of Bersih in the first place.

The last thing I wanted was to be used as pawn by any political party.

But Bersih 3.0's message was very clear to me. After Bersih 2.0 , I followed closely the development on the demands of Bersih to EC, the formation of PSC, etc.

I was stumped over and over again at how your Election Commission brushed off allegations of dubious voters, and its non-committal response to clean up the voting process - I made my conclusion that EC and your coalition BN were never serious about electoral reform in the first place.

To be in Bersih 3.0, was a very big step for me as a political atheist. I just wanted to be there, to feel the environment and be part of something good for the country.

Who doesn't want a clean and fair election, let alone you the prime minister, who had been quoted more than once that you, too, want a clean election and not win by fraud.

So how bad can Bersih 3.0 be? (Although friends did warn me that violence may happen.)

How wrong (or naïve?) I was.

The violence I witnessed from 3pm onwards that day, completely put me off. Never in my mind, I imagined our police could be so cruel and inhuman as to attack the rakyat who were there just to be part of the nation's aspiration for a clean election.

To witness the beatings with my own eyes, made it even more painful.

I was spared from bodily harm but my heart is hurt. Hurt for thinking we had a caring government and a responsive prime minister.

All completely vanished in the smoke of the tear gas.

I walked home with only one resolution - that I will give my vote to the federal opposition and this is one middle ground vote that BN lost on that fateful day.

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