

## **Bersih endorsees: Don't be distracted by gov't spin**

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**By Kuek Ser Kuang Keng**

Civil society organisations that have endorsed the Bersih movement have urged the public not to be distracted by the government's spin on the April 28 rally, but to bring the focus back to the demand for reforms toward clean and fair elections.

Representatives of 14 of the 84 endorsees called a press conference in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon to remind the people of Bersih's eight demands.

"Bersih is not just about personalities, not just co-chairpersons Ambiga Sreenevasan or A Samad Said. It is not about overthrowing the government, which is a spin by the government, but about clean and fair elections," said Tan Jo Hann (*left*) of Pusat Komus and the Association of Selangor and Federal Territory Society.

Despite the support of hundreds of thousands of Malaysians who attended Bersih 3.0 rallies in 11 cities in the country and 80 cities across the globe, Tan noted that there has been no significant change or attention to the eight demands.

"The (recommendations of the) parliamentary select committee on electoral reform fall short of what is demanded by the Malaysians," he said.

Election Commission (EC) chief Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof's statement that the number of dubious voters on the electoral roll is just 0.3 percent of the total voters and that Malaysia's electoral roll is the "cleanest in the world", only shows that the EC is not sincere in addressing the issues, Tan said.

"Has it become legalised cheating in Malaysia? This is what we fear," he said, reiterating a Bersih demand that the current election commissioners should resign en bloc.

Asked about EC deputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar's (*right*) description of Ambiga as a "destroyer of democracy" and his announcement that the commission has closed its doors to consultation with Bersih, Tan challenged Wan Ahmad to direct his remarks at the people.

"Is he saying that to the 250,000 people who came to the rally? If he wants to say it, don't say it to Ambiga but to us. Is he saying all the 250,000 people are destroyers of democracy?"

"It shows that he has missed the point. They (the EC) have not done their job well but have turned around to blame others ... the focus is, our electoral roll sucks!"

### **Najib challenged**

Should the government still refuse to recognise the problems despite all the revelations on

electoral fraud and irregularities, then Najib Abdul Razak should take the noble way out and step down as prime minister, Tan said.

Asked to comment on MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek's claim that the Bersih 3.0 rally was hijacked by the opposition, he again deemed this to be spin to distract people from the core issue of clean and fair elections.

Ivy Josiah of the Women's Aid Organisation noted that the political speeches made during the rally could not overshadow the will of hundreds of thousands protesters.

However, she declined comment when asked about PKR leaders continuing to negotiate with the police to enter the barricaded Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur, even after Bersih leaders had told the protestors to disperse.

She said it would not be fair to comment as the real circumstances surrounding the issue are still being probed, and the Bersih steering committee will carry out an evaluation on Friday.

The evaluation will also discuss the next step, should the authorities continue to ignore Bersih's demands.

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