

Fears of cover-up if Hanif not replaced

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COMMENT The appointment of former inspector-general of police Hanif Omar to head the independent panel to probe incidents of violence during the Bersih 3.0 rally has raised deep public concerns that the investigation will either be a whitewash of police brutality on peaceful demonstrators, a massive cover-up of the sufferings of the victims, or a pretext to justify BN's wild lies that Bersih 3.0 was a *coup d'état* attempt.

Hanif, who is now Genting Malaysia Bhd deputy chair, had claimed that communist sympathisers were involved in the Bersih 3.0 rally, and supported Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's claim that the Bersih 3.0 rally was an attempt to overthrow the government.

Hanif further stated that the tactics of using provocateurs to cause the demonstrators to clash with police and to bring children along in the hope they would get injured, were tactics learnt from past pro-communist demonstrations.

How can Najib consider Hanif as a "credible, experienced and respectable" individual that ensures its investigation panel is independent and unbiased, when Hanif has adopted such a prejudiced and partisan stand against the Bersih 3.0 rally as an attempt to overthrow the government?

What makes those claims of a *coup d'etat* by Najib and Hanif most ridiculous is that both ignored the fact that six local pressmen and about 12 photographers and journalists from the foreign media were reportedly assaulted during the fracas on April 28 Bersih 3.0 rally by police.

To add insult to injury, Hanif is now heading the investigation panel raising doubts about the integrity, reliability and credibility of its findings.

As a former inspector-general of police, Hanif is first and foremost disqualified from serving on the investigation panel due to conflict of interest as the police is being accused.

Secondly, by publicly condemning Bersih, Hanif's bias and prejudice would also disqualify him to serve on the investigation panel.

Finally, by linking Bersih to communism, Hanif is still fighting yesterday's long-concluded wars, making the outcome of these investigations a foregone conclusion.

For these reasons, the prime minister should try to salvage or restore some credibility and public confidence as well as renew faith that "justice will not only be done but be seen to be done" by replacing Hanif with an independent, apolitical, unbiased and an upright person of integrity.