

Traders 'grill' Ambiga with burger protest

MalaysiaKini.com

May 10, 2012

By Nicholas Wong

Petty traders group Ikhlas has set up a burger stall outside Bersih co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan's house to protest against the loss of income caused by the Bersih rally two Saturdays ago.

"If we cannot do business in KL, then we will do business here," said Ikhlas chairperson Mohd Ridzuan Abdullah.

However, the move is clearly symbolic as the location of the stall - in the upmarket Bukit Damansara suburb - did not appear to provide the necessary volume of customers.

According to the minders at the stall, the burgers are to be given away for free and 200 burgers are to be prepared.

"This is a gimmick", remarked one minder, when asked about the free burgers.

This is the second protest by Ikhlas since last Saturday, where 30 traders claimed that they suffered more than RM200,000 in losses because of Bersih 3.0.

Women's rights activist Ivy Josiah, a close friend of Ambiga, has quipped that the Bersih leader is a vegetarian in a *Twitter* posting.

The dozen protestors dismantled the burger stall and left the area by 3.15pm, over an hour after setting up shop but not before cleaning up.

"*Nah, bersih* (There, clean)," they joked, in reference to the name of the electoral reforms movement.

Traders want compensation

Later, Ikhlas chairperson Mohd Ridzuan Abdullah (*below*) heatedly explained that they were protesting to seek compensation for the traders whose businesses were affected during the rally.

For Bersih 2.0, 317 traders had made claims amounting to losses of RM 817,205, he said while brandishing a compilation of the claims.

"For Bersih 3.0, we are still gathering information about the damages," he said, but estimated that from the 232 reports so far, the losses stood at about RM 200,000.

He gave Ambiga two weeks to respond, failing which they would hold a "2.0 protest" with stalls spanning the entire street.

When asked if they would apply for a permit or risk police arrest, Ridzuan brushed it off by claiming that the police would have to also arrest Ambiga.

He also implied that the group was only safely channelling what would otherwise be a more aggressive backlash against Bersih.

“Ikhlas has managed to control all these traders. If they follow emotions, who knows what will happen?”

“We have successfully ‘cooled’ these people,” he added.

When queried as to why they were targeting Ambiga specifically, they cited her as the organiser of the rally.

“She was the one meeting with (KL mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail) and DBKL. She’s the organiser,” he said.

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