

## **'Only good communists support Bersih'**

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**By Zulaikha Zulkifli**

Bersih steering committee member Hishamuddin Rais today shrugged off former federal police chief Hanif Omar's statement that communist sympathisers were involved in the Bersih 3.0 rally.

Hishamuddin said, cynically, that if communist elements were involved in the April 28 rally as claimed, they would be "good communists" who supported Bersih's demands for clean and fair elections.

"It's okay if he says that many people who came to Bersih are communists, for this means they're good communists who are against cheating by the Election Commission. This makes the communist struggle a noble one," he said, tongue-in-cheek.

In a statement that could be alluding to Hishamuddin and his contemporaries, Hanif said the April 28 rally was spearheaded by those spreading the communist ideology, who were active in demonstrations in the 1970s.

Hishamuddin was a prominent leftist student activist in the 1970s and played an important role during the Bersih 3.0 demonstration.

Commenting on Hanif's appointment as chairperson of the independent panel to probe claims of police brutality, Hishamuddin said the former IGP lacked credibility and independence.

"Appointing Hanif Omar as the panel chief is like appointing (billionaire businessman) Vincent Tan to take care of Baitulmal or to give the Friday sermon...(Hanif) does not fit the bill," he said.

'Hanif knows he's not the right man'

Meanwhile, PKR Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin said no panel could be considered independent if the person heading it is not, since Hanif had made prejudicial remarks against Bersih 3.0.

Shamsul (*right*) said Hanif should remember that he had made a similar comment on the proposed Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC).

"The IPCMC must have the confidence not only of the public but also of the police. Thus, appoint the right people to be commissioners; this is absolutely vital," Shamsul had quoted Hanif as writing in *The Star* in 2006.

He added that Hanif should, therefore, recuse himself and he called on the other panel members to follow suit.

"We urge Malaysians to reject any investigation into Bersih 3.0 if the chairperson of the investigation panel and panellists without integrity are retained on the panel," Shamsul said in the statement.

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