

Utusan twisted warning to PAS, says Bersih
MalaysiaKini.com
Aug 4, 2014

The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih) has slammed Utusan Malaysia for alleging it is now in cahoots with DAP and PKR to tear down a 'racist' PAS.

The statement, jointly issued by its 11-member steering committee, which is headed by Maria Chin Abdullah, stressed that the coalition of NGOs were, in fact, still "independent of any political party."

Its earlier statement, which reminded PAS about its election promises, had been twisted to make it seem like Bersih were out to attack the Islamist party, they said.

"The first accusation is easily rejected—nowhere did we say PAS was racist. We voiced disapproval that the party was even considering such a plan, pointed out that it was unconstitutional in spirit and letter, and called out the party for betraying its own promise that it was a party for all.

"The second (that we are partners of PKR and DAP) is as completely baseless. With no evidence offered, it should be dismissed for what it is—a wild accusation.," the Bersih statement asserted.

It added that Bersih merely urged PAS to stick to its election slogan - "PAS for all."

"Even in merely entertaining race-based delineation, PAS has betrayed this ideal. The party appears to have forgotten the interest of the voters who chose them," its original statement published on July 31 had on its website read.

The statement was in response to "exposed PAS thinking" by way of Mohd Zuhdi Marzuki's (left) private WhatsApp messages amongst PAS leaders.

A part of the leaked messages said that PAS can consider the idea of electoral delineation by race and religion.

'Suggestions violate constitution'

Bersih, which is running a campaign to safeguard the electoral maps from being redrawn and manipulated by any political party, noted that PAS suggestions would also violate the federal constitution.

The constitution calls for the delineation to maintain local ties but said nothing about using race or religion as a factor, it observed.

But in the Utusan editorial piece today, its editor Zulkiflee Bakar defended PAS, saying that it was a victim of political attacks from those it once considered friends.

Zulkiflee charged that Bersih had issued statements against PAS without first fully knowing what the leaked WhatsApp messages were really about.

He added that for the sake of an agenda to replace Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim with PKR defacto leader Anwar Ibrahim's wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, even Bersih had compromised on its goal to serve the people.

He alleged that Bersih was showing its true colours by becoming a tool for PKR and DAP to attack PAS, some of whose leaders have backed Khalid (left).

"Needless to say, the lack of verification has never stopped Utusan from publishing its stories," Bersih said, refuting the Umno-owned daily's allegations.

"Bersih is clear on our position: We are against any delineation or seat increase based on race. We have consistently taken a position on principle and it is no different here.

"Our position also comes from the fact that the Bersih movement is supported by all Malaysians regardless of ethnic background, as evident in the support shown during the Bersih rallies," the NGO said.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/270580>