

Kadir: Bersih 4 rally can't unseat Najib

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak cannot be unseated whether by the people or by the Parliament anytime soon, opined the former New Straits Times Press editor-in-chief A Kadir Jasin.

This is regardless of how much support the Bersih movement garners in the rally to be held this weekend, he said.

“If the aim of Bersih is to topple Najib, it won’t happen. Demonstrations, street protests, will not change Najib. He would not resign even if we stand in the sun and soak in sweat protesting,” Kadir (photo) told a forum organised by Malaysiakini last night.

He said that despite Najib’s promises of an inclusive government, he had in fact become "exclusive" and does not appear to think that he needs the rakyat.

Kadir pointed out that no Malaysian prime minister has faced as many insults as Najib and still remain in power, and this will remain the case in the near term no matter how much support Bersih gets.

As for Parliament, he said it is difficult to muster enough support for a no-confidence vote, and the MPs could have been bought over.

“So if you make noise, they would say, ‘You also receive money, and you also receive money’, so everybody will be quiet.

“So I am not very optimistic of a change because of Bersih, after Bersih, in the Parliament, in the near future,” he said.

Rally a referendum on Najib’s administration

Nevertheless, Centre for Better Tomorrow (Cenbet) co-president Gan Ping Sieu (photo) believes that the upcoming rally will be a referendum on the public confidence in Najib’s administration.

He told the forum that although the Bersih steering committee has cited several reasons for holding the rally, the only reason people would attend it is to express their views on whether Najib should take leave until the investigations on him are completed or resign outright.

“So to me, Bersih will be a referendum of the people towards the current administration under Najib. I think people will attend Bersih for one simple reason: Of anger, frustration, and uncertainty (amid) the (political and economic) crisis that we are facing,” Gan said.

At the forum themed '1MDB: People's Protest or Dewan Rakyat', he said the Parliament is the only legitimate body that can unseat a prime minister, and Bersih has already made it clear that it is not seeking to overthrow Najib through other radical means.

Nevertheless, the former youth and sports deputy minister said it is within the constitutional rights of Bersih and its supporters to hold a peaceful rally calling for Najib to step down.

"This is a very good platform and mechanism to express our views on, given the political crisis and economic crisis that we are facing now, whether Najib should carry on," he said, while stressing the constitutional guarantees for the right to peaceful assembly and the freedom of expression.

Meanwhile, Bersih steering committee chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah (photo) told the audience at the forum that it has received a lot of public support.

In addition to the "very encouraging" turnouts at Bersih's roadshows, she said that the donation received by Bersih is now almost RM2 million.

Previously on Monday, she had said that the figure at the time stood at RM1.5 million.

"Within less than a month, we have actually hit almost RM2 million. That in itself shows that people want change, and people are supporting the demands of Bersih.

"Therefore I think it is about time leaders start listening," she said.

Over 150 people attended the forum which was held at Malaysiakini's office in Petaling Jaya.

In addition, the entire session was streamed live online, and that received over 2,000 viewers at its peak.

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