

Why gung-ho on Bersih, no opinion on 'red shirt', Zahid asked
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DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang has questioned Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's stand to allow Umno members to join the red shirt anti-Bersih protest.

"Can Zahid explain why he is now talking about the 'individual rights of Umno members' to attend the red shirt rally when he had threatened punitive action against those who attended the Bersih 4 rally?" Lim (photo) asked in a statement today.

Zahid, who is also the home minister, had yesterday said he will not bar Umno members from joining in the anti-Bersih protest as it is the individual rights of Umno members.

He also mentioned that while the NGO behind the protest will invite Umno, the government will not get involved with the rally.

"The government has no opinion on this. We will leave it 100 percent to the police to take action, especially to give a permit and to carry out enforcement if the permit is given," he had said.

Lim also questioned this lack of opinion from the government, pointing out that Zahid was quite vocal in condemning the Bersih 4 rally.

"It was Zahid himself who had repeatedly warned that the authorities would take stern action against the mastermind and participants of the Bersih 4 rally and even personally signed the order banning Bersih 4 T-shirts.

"Why does the government has 'no opinion' on the red shirt rally when he (Zahid) was so gung-ho and hawkish in his condemnation of the Bersih 4 rally?" he added.

Rally barred due to security reasons

The home minister's stand on the rally is even more surprising, Lim said, given that the deputy inspector-general of police Noor Rashid Ibrahim had announced that the red shirt rally is barred due to security reasons.

As the publicity for the red shirt rally has been racially-charged, Lim wondered if the police will now investigate Zahid for his comments.

"Is the police going to investigate Zahid as to why the home minister is encouraging the holding of the red shirt rally, when he said that Umno members will not be barred from participating in the rally?" he asked.

The red shirt rally on Sept 16 is meant to protest the allegedly racist and Chinese-dominated Bersih 4 rally.

He then reminded that the theme of this year's independence day is Sehati Sejiwa (One Heart, One Soul) and that the cabinet should do well to remember this as the red shirt rally is the very "antithesis" of the theme of unity in diversity.

Thus, the cabinet meeting today needs to address the issues plaguing the country right now, he said.

"The cabinet meeting today is very crucial and if the cabinet cannot set the country right to address and resolve the multiple crisis of confidence plaguing the country, then it is not a cabinet Malaysians need at this critical hour," he said.

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