

## **Malaysia does not want to be a battleground**

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MP SPEAKS Last week, Malaysia saw a four-hour red shirts rally in Kuala Lumpur as a counter to a 34-hour yellow T-shirts Bersih 4 overnight rally on August 29-30.

There can be no greater differences between the red shirts rally and the yellow T-shirts rally.

Firstly, the yellow T-shirts Bersih 4 Rally transcended race and was participated by hundreds of thousands of Malaysians, regardless of race, religion, region, gender, age or politics, who came together with one common national purpose – good governance and clean, free and fair elections.

Those who participated in the two-day Bersih 4 Rally never thought there could be any racial clash or confrontation, for that was furthest from their mind as they gathered, not for or against any race but for the sake of a better Malaysia for all races.

The Bersih 4 participants were worried that there might be trouble, but not of any racial nature – for their only worry was that the police might not be independent and professional enough and might wantonly and arbitrarily fire tear gas and shoot water cannons into a peaceful and defenceless crowds.

That was why some of the Bersih 4 participants armed themselves with goggles and smelling salts, not as weapons of offence but to protect themselves.

The red shirts rally, on the other hand, invoked fear of racial incidents right from the beginning of the announcement of the event immediately after the Bersih 4 overnight rally, and for a fortnight, the country was inundated with highly-charged images of racial slurs, confrontation and even bloodbath.

And, the objective of the red shirts rally veered from “Kebangkitan Maruah Melayu” to “counter Chinese Bersih 4”, “Teach Chinese DAP a lesson”, “Defend Najib Razak as Prime Minister”, among others.

Everybody who donned a yellow T-shirt on Aug 29-30 knew why he or she was at the Bersih 4 rally, but not everyone who donned a red shirt at the Sept 16 rally knew why he or she was at the Padang Merbok in Kuala Lumpur.

### **Brought in by Umno divisions, and paid**

The hundreds of thousands who took part in the two-day Bersih 4 rally converged in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching and in Kota Kinabalu, on their own expenses. However, the 45,000 people at the Sept 16 red shirt rally were brought in from all over the peninsula by Umno

divisions, in some 2,000 buses and provided with all the pocket monies.

The hundreds of thousands of people came to the two-day Bersih 4 rally in peace but the organisers of the Sept 16 red shirts rally were not shy of being combative, belligerent and hostile - even to the police trying to uphold peace, law and order.

The two-day Bersih 4 rally was founded on noble objectives of good governance and clean, free and fair elections.

But the Sept 16 red shirts rally was built on lies and falsehoods - that the Bersih 4 rally had attacked the rights and dignity of the Malays; that the DAP had masterminded Bersih 4 rally; that Bersih 4 rally was really a Chinese show-of-force to challenge the political power of the Malays; that the DAP is a Chinese political party to confront the Malays; that I had caused the May 13, 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur by leading anti-Malay "victory processions" and hurling anti-Malay slogans in the streets of Kuala Lumpur when I was never in Kuala Lumpur after the May 10, 1969 general election and was in Kota Kinabalu on May 13 1969!

But the biggest and most mischievous lie of all was that Bersih 4 was a Chinese "show-of-force" to challenge Malay political power, and that Malay dignity had been trampled on by four Bersih 4 rallies and that it was time for the Malays to react and counter such Chinese "show-of-force".

It is true that Malay participation on the first day of the Bersih 4 rally was quite low, but this was more than made up on the second day of Bersih 4 with Malay participation reaching some 40 percent.

Seven speakers at a ceramah I spoke at the Kuala Terengganu DAP branch at Dataran Pulau Warisan, Kampung Cina in Kuala Terengganu last night were all at the Bersih 4 rally - the MP for Kuala Terengganu Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah, the MP for Shah Alam Khalid Samad, the MP for Ipoh Timor Thomas Su, the Bandar Terengganu assemblyperson Azan Ismail, the coordinator for DAP Impian Kelantan Syefura Othman (Rara), the Terengganu DAP chairperson Ng Chai Heng and myself.

It is completely untrue and a downright lie that Bersih 4 and the other three Bersih rallies had attacked Malay rights and dignity when the objective was to uphold Malaysian rights and dignity - which must involve upholding the rights and dignity of all races and religions in the country.

In any event, it is completely inconceivable that the previous three Bersih rallies, which were dominated by Malays, had attacked Malay rights and dignity, as Bersih 1 of 2007 was dominated with some 80 percent Malays, Bersih 2 of 2011 had some 70 percent Malays and Bersih 3 in 2012 with some 60 percent Malays - just as it is unthinkable that Bersih 4, which had some 40 percent Malays on the second day of the rally, would attack Malay dignity and rights.

Over the weekend, former Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya said jokingly in Kuala Lumpur that he felt at home when he heard of the yellow T-shirt Bersih 4 rally and the red shirt Malay rally on Sept 16, but he hoped that Malaysians would not bring racial issues to street rallies, or it would mean disaster not only for Malaysia but also for the Asean region.

If Malaysia should degenerate into a battle between “red shirts” versus “yellow shirts”, Malaysia would end up with the fate of war-torn countries and failed states like Syria and Iraq and Malaysia would have failed as Asean Chair this year if we are bogged down by multiple crisis of confidence in the country and unable to provide leadership to Asean as the Asean Chair this year.

Let all Malaysians make a resolution: We do not want to be a battleground of “yellow T-shirts” versus “red T-shirts” as we want all Malaysians to be united behind the Malaysian Dream for an united, harmonious, democratic, just, prosperous and progressive nation.

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