

**Citizen's Declaration aims to hit 1m signatures in two weeks**  
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The movement to 'Save Malaysia' has managed to collect approximately 500,000 signatures for its Citizens' Declaration petition and they are confident of hitting their target in two weeks.

The petition is to be submitted to the conference of rulers to seek the ouster of Prime Minister Najib Razak when it meets its targetted one million signatures.

Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah said some 230,000 citizens have signed the online petition, while another 270,000 signatures were gathered during roadshows, ceramah and walkabouts at *pasar malam* (night markets).

While they have met only 50 percent of their target, she is confident that they will get the other half a million soon.

"We are expecting to achieve our target in two weeks' time; more will sign during the coming May 1 rally organised by the Malaysian Trades Union Congress in Kuala Lumpur," Maria said at the Save Malaysia forum in Penang last night.

"Umno too, is working hard on the ground to collect the signatures, and we invite everyone to come on board with us as the country is facing a crisis.

"If you do not think the country is in crisis, it is time to read up," she said.

While acknowledging that some quarters may feel the effort by the Save Malaysia movement would not bring any change and that Najib will still remain in power, Maria said, "We have to try."

"If one million signatures are not enough, we will go for two million or three million. We must never stop trying," she said.

She was joined on the panel by Centre to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) director Cynthia Gabriel, former law minister Zaid Ibrahim, and social activist cum writer Hishamuddin Rais.

Aliran's Prema Devaraj moderated the three-hour event held at the Kompleks Masyarakat Penyayang in George Town, before a 150-strong audience.

### **Umno's Team B pitches in**

Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has also joined the movement, together with his son, former Kedah menteri besar Mukhriz Mahathir, ex-deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, and ex-federal minister Shafie Apdal.

Describing themselves as Umno's Team B, Mahathir's father and son team has been aggressively campaigning from state to state.

Their most recent event in Jitra, Kedah, attracted some 2,000 supporters who also signed the Citizens' Declaration.

Najib had responded to declaration's calling for his ouster as "wrong in law".

The premier is facing intense pressure to quit after allegations involving financial discrepancies in 1MBD, a sovereign fund on which he is the chair for the advisory board, and the RM2.6 billion purported donation deposited in his private accounts before GE13, surfaced in the international media.

Najib has denied gaining personally from the funds, and attorney-general Mohamed Apandi Ali has cleared him of any wrongdoing.

Zaid however said that it was perfectly right for citizens in a democracy to sign any petition to seek the resignation of their prime minister.

“What we are doing is legal and democratic and we are not doing anything wrong by signing the petition, as we are not asking for armed rebellion,” he told the crowd last night.

Gabriel concurred, saying it was not a crime to sign a petition on any issue, including demanding for one’s prime minister to quit.

“It is perfectly legal to sign the petition and it is within the ambit of a democracy to ask a sitting prime minister to stand down, as we have given him so many opportunities to explain himself,” she said.

“Since allegations against him were exposed in the media, civil society leaders have asked him to explain.

“(He should) just answer the allegations, but he has responded by repressing and oppressing us further, by killing the news and shutting up reporters, and charging with sedition those who blow the whistle on corruption,” she added.

### **Ruled by stupidity**

Hishamuddin, meanwhile, said Najib should step down as the country should be ruled by neither a joker nor his stupidity.

He cited the different versions Najib had purportedly used to explain the source of the RM2.6 billion said to be donations, first saying it was from the Saudi Arabian king, the prince, and from certain individuals. The Saudi Finance Ministry eventually claimed the money was for investment purposes.

“His stupidity was saying that he returned the money; his crime is in being stupid and we cannot handle this kind of prime minister, so he should step down,” Hishamuddin said, to much laughter from the crowd.

“When the parliamentary accounts committee (report) came out, Najib said he signed the documents related to 1MDB without knowing what he signed.

“This is another stupidity; what kind of prime minister does not even bother to read what he signed?” Hishamuddin asked.

“If this is not criminal, what is? We have allowed ourselves for the past 60 years to be ruled by jokers,” he added.

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