

**Govt Urged To Facilitate Peaceful Assembly**  
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**By Lim Chee Wee**

The Malaysian Bar calls on the Government - Polis DiRaja Malaysia ("PDRM") and Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur ("DBKL") in particular - to cooperate with the organisers of the upcoming BERSIH 3.0 assembly in order to facilitate a peaceful gathering this Saturday, 28 April 2012.

We reiterate that we support and defend the principle of any individual or group's fundamental freedom to speak, assemble or walk in order to publicly and openly promote and publicise a cause, if that freedom is exercised responsibly and peacefully. The right to gather and to speak is not fully respected if it is shunted into the confines of a stadium.

PDRM has demonstrated on various occasions in the past four months, and even prior to that, that it can work with organisers of public assemblies to monitor routes and manage traffic flows to allow participants to walk, and openly and outwardly express their viewpoints to members of the public, in safety. We commend these positive and salutary examples.

It is thus evident that, with proper liaising and cooperation, it is possible for PDRM and the organisers of the BERSIH 3.0 event, and any other events, to work together to allow for the public to exercise their fundamental rights in a peaceful and responsible manner.

This occurs regularly in more mature democracies, and it has happened in Malaysia. We urge the Government to take measures to allow, and encourage, such practices to continue. Let us take this opportunity to promote, enhance and celebrate democracy.

From lessons observed worldwide, it is clear that the voice of the people cannot be silenced. Our Government (and this includes the Government-appointed DBKL leadership) ignores the wishes and resolve of the people at its peril, and should, instead, rise to the occasion, to embrace and protect its people's freedoms and rights consistent with a true democracy. Only then can we have a world-class democracy practising internationally-accepted human rights standards and respected by all.

The Malaysian Bar therefore calls on PDRM to permit all walks and public assemblies, and the activities leading up to them, to take place peacefully and with minimal intrusion and disruption, while ensuring public order and protecting the safety of all participants.

Bar Council will send a team to monitor events on the ground on Saturday. In addition, a team from the Bar Council Legal Aid Centre (Kuala Lumpur), led by the following lawyers, will provide legal assistance in the event of arrests:

- (1) Rajeswari Paramasevam (012-275 1660)
- (2) Lim Chi Chau (016-228 8142)
- (3) Adora Yusof (019-317 8347)

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(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)

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