

Hanif's Appointment Discredits Panel On Bersih 3.0
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By Teresa Kok

I am flabbergasted to ascertain that the former Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Hanif Omar, has been appointed to head the 'independent panel' that will probe the ugly events of Bersih 3.0 - where the rights of thousands of innocent Malaysians were violated by the police authorities. I urge the government to remove Hanif Omar from the panel and appoint the United Nations Special Rapporteur (on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression) Frank William La Rue as lead panel.

The purpose of any independent panel investigating abuses is to act impartially without fear or favour. As Hanif Omar carries allegiance to his former employers (the police force and the Barisan Nasional government), it does not augur well with the need for neutrals to be on the panel.

Furthermore, with Hanif Omar's prejudiced approach to his role on the panel – given he has already made public his views that protestors in Bersih 3.0 were "communists ympathisers" – the government cannot ensure that he will be viewing the sought evidence without discriminatory eyes.

As mentioned by DAP Secretary-General Lim Guan Eng, in a comment published on Malaysiakini today, I am in full support of the need for the prime minister to replace Hanif Omar as the panel head to "restore some credibility and public confidence" in the panel.

Therefore I call on the government to ensure that there is a change in the panel chief and ensure that there is a balanced composition of panel members. The prime minister should seriously reconsider his rejection of the offer by Frank William La Rue to investigate the protest.

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