

DAP Is Big Enough For Tunku To Remain
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By Lim Guan Eng

When announcing his resignation from DAP, Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim cited "irreconcilable differences" with the party leadership in dissenting with DAP's official position to support Bersih 3.0 to conduct a peaceful sit-in protest in Dataran Merdeka to press for clean, free and fair elections. DAP is big enough for Tunku Abdul Aziz to remain as National Vice-Chair and accommodate his "irreconcilable differences" with the DAP on Bersih's quest to conduct a sit-in protest in Dataran Merdeka to press for clean elections.

Malaysiakini reported Tunku Abdul Aziz as saying his open disagreement with DAP made Tunku himself choose not to be re-nominated as a senator for Penang when his term expired on 30 May 2012, and stated that he was not sacked from his Dewan Negara's post by DAP. Tunku Aziz had also suggested to the party leadership that DAP should subject him to the "same disciplinary procedure as any other party member" for his dissent. As disciplinary action from DAP was not forthcoming he had decided to resign from the DAP to avoid further embarrassment.

I would like to express my sadness at Tunku's announcement. DAP believes in freedom of speech and that every member and leader has a right to differ. I don't agree that any disciplinary action should be taken against Tunku for differing with the party on Bersih's right to do the sit-in protest in Dataran Merdeka.

Indeed there was general unhappiness at all levels in the party that he openly went against the party official position on Bersih before the rally on 28 April and also after. However, just as Tunku has the right to openly voice his dissent, the party's right to state its position on such a fundamental policy position as Bersih must also be respected. The party did not punish Tunku for voicing his dissent openly nor at any stage asked him to leave or resign.

I feel sad about Tunku wanting to leave the party because of differences over Bersih. After all Tunku had joined DAP because DAP offered a platform to promote integrity and fight corruption. DAP's performance in government after winning power in Penang in 2008 has been walking the talk in promoting integrity and fighting corruption.

Penang Pakatan Rakyat has taken the lead with open competitive tenders, open disclosure of government contracts and public declaration of assets by leaders. Not only Transparency International and the Auditor-General Report praised Penang's financial performance, even former MCA President Dr Ling Liong Sik praised Penang for performing well and been clean from corruption.

Despite Tunku open dissent, the DAP leadership does not want him to leave the party but remain as DAP Vice-Chair. I hope we can resolve whatever differences within the party in the spirit of comradeship. I will contact Tunku to see him to discuss with him and hope he can change his mind about leaving the party.

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