

## **Assurance Must Be Coupled With Public Pledge**

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**By Lim Kit Siang**

After prolonged silence, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein has given the assurance that the authorities would maintain peace and order at all costs should there be attempts to create chaos during and after the next general election.

He said the police would act impartially and according to the law to maintain order, declaring "Anyone who violates the law will be prosecuted to ensure the safety of the innocent. The safety of the people is of paramount importance."

However, Hishammuddin's statement failed to achieve the effect of giving full assurance to Malaysians for two reasons, viz:

- The inaction/indifference of the Prime Minister, Home Minister and the police authorities to the recent escalation of the political culture of aggression, thuggery and violence targeting Pakatan Rakyat and Bersih 2.0 leaders, including Anwar Ibrahim, Lim Guan Eng, Nurul Izzah, Ambiga Sreenivasan, Nizar Jamaluddin and most recently, the vicious attacks on DAP Selangor State Committee member V. Ganapathirao and his brother Papparaidu in Klang last Wednesday.

- The threat by the Prime Minister, Najib Razak when invoking the language of "crushed bodies, lives lost" for UMNO to defend power at any cost in Putrajaya at the 2010 UMNO General Assembly.

Hishammuddin's assurance of "order during and after GE" is quite meaningless if it not coupled with a public pledge by Najib and key UMNO Ministers that BN will leave Putrajaya peacefully if it loses the 13 general election – especially after his "crushed bodies, lives lost" speech at the UMNO General Assembly two years ago.

Is Hishammuddin prepared not only to give a personal assurance as Home Minister that UMNO and BN would leave Putrajaya peacefully if they lose the general election, but to get the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the UMNO/Barisan Nasional Supreme Councils to make such a public pledge.

This has nothing to do with whether Pakatan Rakyat is confident of winning Putrajaya in the next general election, but whether the UMNO/BN leaderships can pass the supreme test as Malaysian democrats who are prepared to accept the fundamental rights of Malaysian citizens to change the national government through the ballot box – one of the prerequisites for a country to claim that it is a normal democracy before any pretension to want to be the world's best democracy!

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