

Threats, Racism & Lies: A Regime Hanging On To Power?

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Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr said "Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity". I wonder what ruling Barisan Nasional's Sri Gading lawmaker Mohamad Aziz is. Chances are maybe both.

I cannot really say I am shocked by his statement calling for Bersih's co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan to be "hanged" for treason towards the King. Mohamad called her a traitor for leading the call for free and fair elections, prompting tens of thousands of people to take to the streets last July.

We have been seeing politicians from the ruling camp spewing venom just because they have absolute power and know their dangerously stupid remarks would be dismissed.

And sure enough BN secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor said Mohamad's views were his personal opinion and do not reflect party stance. And then he subtly reminded the public that the case related to the Bersih 3.0 assembly is still under investigation by the authorities.

Mohamad was not reprimanded although his remarks have the danger of further dividing the nation which is already split down the middle as a result of race-based politics. But realizing his statement sounds ludicrous, he scrambled around to manage the damage done by saying he was merely posing a question to parliament on the possibility of Ambiga being punished. Then Mohamad retracted his remarks.

It is shameless that threats and attacks have been mounted on Ambiga because she is an easy target. Mohamad's statement is not just racist but also seditious. Its clear he threatened Ambiga because she is a woman, an Indian and a Hindu. Even her counterpart, poet laureate Samad Said has said he has been spared because he is a Malay.

Prime minister Najib Razak goes around town trying to engage different communities with his Malaysia rhetoric which aims at national integration through racial unity. But his men don't get it, do they? And Najib himself has kept painfully mum when Ambiga was targeted.

Malaysians sent a strong message at the rally, demanding for electoral reforms. The crowd that turned up cut across a diverse segment of the society. And the government is still reeling from the hit it took - not just because it was unprepared to handle a politically maturing society but also because of the back lash it suffered due to arbitrary and excessive force by the police.

Almost a year after the rally, the government is yet to implement durable reforms ahead of a general election, which is described as one that would be the dirtiest in the country's political history. Instead, we have seen Najib throwing money to buy votes.

But all the cash handouts and speeches peppered with racial undertones, threats of a looming disaster if UMNO loses power plus promises of even more money to the people have not worked

to shift the sentiments on the ground.

People are fed-up of a corrupt government. People are fed-up of the ruling elite lining its pockets. People are fed-up of race-based policies. People are fed-up of widespread discrimination.

In short the people want a change of government and Barisan Nasional politicians are growing out of ideas to hoodwink the public.

So we have a few stupid men talking nonsense.

Malaysia became the laughing stock of the world when international headlines highlighted the "butt exercise" by former soldiers outside Ambiga's house to embarrass and harass her.

While there was no official statement checking this indecent incident, the police came to the aid of traders who set-up burger stalls outside her home to make up for losses sustained during the rally calling for electoral reforms.

Deputy police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said they could not act against the traders as they were in a public space.

And recently Ambiga was slapped with a half a million ringgit fine for alleged damage to the capital city during the rally. If anything, such continued victimization of Ambiga has only angered the people even more.

The government might think that it can cleverly rely on pure fluff that pours out of the mouths of ruling politicians to divert attention from much-needed electoral reforms.

Such thinking is archaic. And the government is better off getting used to the idea that its stronghold on power is slipping fast.

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