

Ibrahim raps Ambiga for 'ultimatum' over King's advice
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By Clara Chooi
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Tuanku Mizan (centre) yesterday told Putrajaya and Bersih 2.0 to talk over the rally. — Reuters pic

KUALA LUMPUR, July 4 — Datuk Ibrahim Ali today accused Bersih 2.0 chairman Datuk Ambiga Sreenivasan of being disrespectful to the King for purportedly issuing an “ultimatum” that she would only call off the rally if she was granted a royal audience.

The Perkasa president also urged the King not to entertain to Ambiga’s request, saying it would set a precedent that future rally organisers would use in order to seek an audience.

“Like us, we have never been given the opportunity to meet with the King, only to send memorandums. But we do not threaten the government because of it.

“I could use these issues — Malay sentiment, scholarship issues — I could turn it emotional but we do not because we love our country and we do things through resolutions, our congress and by submitting memorandums,” he said.

Ibrahim then repeated his claim that royal assent to Ambiga’s request would encourage others to follow suit in future.

“Like if I say I want to hold a demonstration next week. Then the King says not to do it and then we tell him, ‘okay, we will cancel it but we must meet first.’ That is not right,” he said.

The Pasir Mas MP told Ambiga that if she was “principled and cultured enough as a learned solicitor”, she should first call off Bersih’s rally and wait until the situation calmed before requesting to meet with the King.

“It is uncalled for and it is very rude of her. We urge the King not to agree to meet with her until she calls off the rally,” he said.

Earlier, Ibrahim also announced that Perkasa was ready to cancel its rally out of respect to the King, but would proceed if Bersih does so.

In an unprecedented move yesterday, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin stepped in to diffuse tension by advising the Najib administration and Bersih 2.0 to hold consultations over the issue of free and fair elections.

The constitutional monarch rarely issues edicts or statements but the heightened atmosphere over the past week has prompted Istana Negara's intervention.

In an immediate response to the development, Ambiga chaired an emergency meeting of the Bersih 2.0's steering committee last night, where it was decided that the group would abide by the King's advice.

Speaking at a press conference this afternoon, the former Bar Council president announced that she would seek an audience with the King before Saturday and would be willing to call off the July 9 rally.

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