

Khairy offers to work with Bersih if rally called off
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 5 — Umno Youth will call off its counter-rally and instead back some Bersih 2.0 demands if the latter cancels its July 9 march, says Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin.

Khairy told *The Malaysian Insider* yesterday the youth wing will offer the olive branch as it has always acknowledged that the present system required improvements that could be worked out with the Election Commission.

"We believe that a united bipartisan front on points that we agree on will be more effective if Bersih really wants change," the Umno Youth chief said.

In an unexpected turn of events yesterday, Bersih pledged to abide by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin's advice to negotiate with the government instead of forcing a confrontation.

Former Bar Council president Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan who leads the coalition — which was declared illegal last week by the government — of 62 NGOs said she will seek an audience with the King before Saturday and call off the rally if told to do so.

"I've always said that we support the present system but that acknowledge improvements are needed," Khairy **(picture)** added.

The Rembau MP, who is still overseas on a volunteer mission to Gaza, Palestine, said that Umno Youth would support a cleaning of dead individuals on the electoral roll, overseas voting, free access to all media and television slots for all parties contesting elections.

"These can all be on the table for negotiation," he said.

Both Perkasa and Umno Youth had declared earlier yesterday they'd reciprocate a Bersih stand down.

Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin's statement Sunday led to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak making an offer yesterday to provide Bersih with a stadium for their rally if they opted out of a capital march.

Najib's offer came after the government's nationwide clampdown on Bersih 2.0, hoping to block the now-outlawed coalition's July 9 rally which Barisan Nasional insists is politically motivated.

Police have made hundreds of pre-emptive arrests, raids, confiscation of rally-related materials.

The Emergency Ordinance has been used on six Parti Sosialis Rakyat (PSM) members as well.

But Najib is risking damage to his reputation and commitment to reforms as a result of the crackdown.

Opposition politicians have accused the government of abusing the law to arrest activists and seizing rally items

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