

**Najib: Government to defend democratic system**  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government will defend the democratic system and is not afraid of facing the opposition in the general election, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today.

The people would be allowed to decide, through the ballot paper and not by staging street demonstrations, he said when addressing 6,000 people at an information session at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The audience comprised representatives of Umno, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government-linked companies (GLCs).

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister and Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Umno vice-presidents Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, Umno secretary-general Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, Umno information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin and Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

Najib, who is Umno president and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, reminded Malaysians not to subscribe to the culture of street demonstrations, saying the country upheld the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

"We dislike chaos. We like peace. We like a country where the people live in harmony. We prefer a country where our life in the future will be better than what it is today," he said.

Najib explained that the gathering today was not a show of force but to demonstrate that the silent majority was strong and was with the government.

He said the government, particularly Umno, could mobilise its supporters in bigger numbers than the street demonstrators, but Umno did not wish to do so.

Najib said the organiser of yesterday's Bersih 2.0 illegal rally and the opposition had wanted to portray Malaysia's as an undemocratic government in the eyes of the world.

The organiser of the rally had also gone back on their word, he said, adding that they agreed at first to abide by the advice of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and call off the illegal rally but they went ahead with it.

"They said they wanted to hold a peaceful rally. If the police had not monitored it, it would not have been peaceful," he said.

The prime minister said they went ahead with the rally to show the world that the Malaysian government was undemocratic, did not have any regard for laws and human rights, was biased and did not respect the opposition.

He said it would not come as a surprise if the staging of the rally was disseminated on YouTube and through the international media.

Najib said the online media had been critical of the government but their websites were not shut down.

"We are a party that knows that to retain power, we must win over the hearts and minds of the people. It is for this reason that I urge all of you to go down to the ground and meet the people.

"Tell them that Umno and the BN will continue to defend the principles of democracy in our country. We will ensure democracy and a free and clean general election," he said.

Najib said he was unwilling to have Umno set up a government by cheating the people, but only with the full support of the people.

"This is our only country. We will defend it whatever the circumstances. Let not anyone belittle the Malaysia that we love," he said.

Najib said Umno and the BN were not afraid of facing a free and clean election because the government would ensure that every election was free and transparent.

"Representatives from our side and the opposition are present when a ballot box is opened for the counting of votes. How can there be phantom votes? All voters are registered and the electoral rolls are put on display.

"This is our process. That's why we have to work hard during an election. Some of us miss our sleep. Some ministers get worried.

"If we can manipulate the election, there will no ministers who are worried, we cannot lose five states, we will not lose our two-third majority in parliament, and PAS will not be able to administer Kelantan for 21 years," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, Najib said the information session was to explain to Umno members and supporters of the government current issues and the government's stand on them.

When asked about the silent majority who had opposed the Bersih 2.0 rally, the prime minister said it was time that they stopped being silent.

He said they could voice their opinions online.

"There are many ways you can voice your opinion. You can air your views online and so forth. I think it is about time these people stood up and were counted.

"But that does not mean for one moment that we are not committed to democracy and the rules in this country," he said.

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