

**Muhyiddin likens Bersih rally to violent UK riots**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**August 18, 2011**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 — Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today drew parallels between the recent UK riots and last month's Bersih rally even after the prime minister distanced himself from the harsh crackdown on the march for free and fair elections.

Seemingly out of step with Datuk Seri Najib Razak's new, more conciliatory stance, Muhyiddin congratulated the police for their handling of the Bersih rally after citing the UK riots as a "clear example" of how a country can descend into chaos if "elements that threaten peace and security" are not stopped.

"Although it (UK) is a modern nation, there were people... who took the opportunity to riot and create chaos to fulfil certain needs that are not in line with the needs of the majority," he said at the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) College here.

"The government is very proud and pleased with the role and bravery of PDRM in handling the illegal Bersih demonstration on July 9, 2011 that was, in fact, dirty (kotor)."

Muhyiddin's comments today comes one week after Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said Malaysians should be thankful that police action had prevented the Bersih rally from turning violent like the UK riots.

Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Khalid Abu Bakar has also previously said on his Facebook page that the riots in London and other major cities in Britain were evidence of the "nightmares" that could be prevented by avoiding street protests.

Najib said on Monday that a bipartisan parliamentary select committee will be formed "as soon as possible" to examine the current electoral system, a key demand of Bersih.

His announcement was seen as a major concession acknowledging the political fallout from his administration's harsh clampdown on the rally for free and fair elections that brought the capital to a standstill last month.

The Najib administration was roundly criticised in the international media, with his reformist image taking a major hit after authorities took extreme measures including firing tear gas and water cannons at largely peaceful demonstrators.

The prime minister's decision also suggests he was forced to give space to Bersih and its iconic leader Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan as the government has been floundering since last month's rally.

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