

DAP vice-chairman not in favour of gathering

TheStarOnline

April 27, 2012

PUTRAJAYA: DAP's support for Bersih 3.0 has met with objections from its vice-chairman Senator Tunku Abdul Aziz, who opposes the demonstration scheduled for tomorrow.

Tunku Aziz said he did not endorse the Bersih 3.0 gathering as it "encourages Malaysians to break the law".

He said he supported an individual's constitutional right to an assembly but felt that this must be done within the provisions of the law.

"I am in favour of us assembling if that is not breaking the law, and breaking the law is something that I cannot support as I am a lawmaker," Tunku Aziz said yesterday.

He regarded the Bersih 3.0 coalition organisers as "irresponsible" for refusing the Government's offer to relocate the sit-in protest from Dataran Merdeka to a stadium to guarantee the safety of the participants.

He said the police were responsible for security in the country and the organisers should cooperate with them.

The Home Ministry and the Kuala Lumpur City Hall had offered several venues, including Stadium Merdeka and Bukit Jalil National Stadium, but the organisers had rejected them.

Tengku Aziz said: "There must be other ways to affect change without going to the streets, such as getting elected representatives to present your concerns in Parliament. I am opposed to this (Bersih 3.0) on a personal basis as a matter of principle, but what the party wants to do is its decision."

Later in an e-mail, Tunku Aziz said he had spoken to both DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and party adviser Lim Kit Siang about his statement.

"I wish to reiterate, even though I do not agree with the approach taken by Bersih, that is my personal view," he added.

In IPOH, at a DAP political dinner, Kit Siang urged Perak folk to join the Bersih 3.0 rally at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Recreational Park, popularly known as the Polo Ground, if they cannot make it to Dataran Merdeka.

At the same function, Guan Eng called on the public to show their support for the rally by wearing yellow on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the human rights association Proham (Persatuan Promosi Hak Asasi Malaysia) urged the authorities to facilitate Bersih 3.0.

Its chairman Tan Sri Simon Sipaun said the federal authorities, including City Hall and the police, should facilitate the demonstration as freedom of assembly was a fundamental right.

"If the authorities and Bersih leaders work together, there should be no disruption," he added in a statement.

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