

Ambiga denies Pakatan hijacking Bersih, unhappy with members' PSC role
The Malaysian Insider
April 14, 2012
By Anisah Shukry

KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 — Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan has denied claims that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) was hijacking Bersih to gain political support, stressing today that she herself was dissatisfied with its members' role in the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reform.

The Bersih 2.0 co-chair maintained that PR members' participation in last year's rally did not mean they were influencing it as the event was open to all Malaysians regardless of their political leanings.

"Are you dying of shock that PR supports it? It is so predictable because they feel hard done by the system," Ambiga (picture) told an audience during a chat session in Bangsar organised by UndiMalaysia.

"We are angry with Pakatan members as well. How can they come out with this (PSC) report without insisting what can be implemented before the 13th General Elections?"

"The report is as good as a thesis."

She added that while some PR parties may feel they have some say in the rally, she had already reminded Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim that he could not dictate what Bersih should do.

"When they called for Bersih at the end of the year, we did not react. We wanted to give the PSC a chance. We took it on good faith," she said.

Bersih will hold its third rally for free and fair elections from 2pm to 4pm at Dataran Merdeka this April 28.

But this time, the gathering will also be joined by simultaneous events across the country, likely adding pressure to the government to accede to the group's demand for a total reform to the country's election processes.

Bersih's previous rally on July 9, 2011 turned chaotic when the authorities employed huge teams of riot police, armed with water cannons and tear gas canisters, to disperse the crowd of thousands.

The crowd had converged on the streets of the capital from the early hours of July 9, defying earlier warnings that their participation could result in arrests.

Over 1,600 people were detained as a result, including Bersih chief Ambiga and scores of opposition lawmakers, but Bersih 2.0 later declared the event a success based on the number of participants and the publicity it had earned in both local and international media.

The government moved quickly to enact the Peaceful Assembly Act after the event and formed a parliamentary select committee for electoral reforms.

But Bersih 2.0 maintains that reforms were inadequate and subsequently announced the April 28 Bersih 3.0 rally.

The first rally, held in 2007, was partly credited for Barisan Nasional's worst electoral performance during Election 2008, when it lost its traditional parliamentary supermajority and five states to the fledgling Pakatan Rakyat pact.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ambiga-denies-pakatan-hijack-king-bersih-unhappy-with-members-psc-role/>