

**PKR says will mobilise 50,000 for Bersih 3.0**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 19 – Joining its partner PAS, PKR said today it hopes to mobilise at least 50,000 members to join the Bersih 3.0 sit-in at Dataran Merdeka next Saturday.

Its secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution (picture) said today that the party is encouraging all its 500,000 members nationwide to show up “in full force” as a way of recording their unhappiness with the government.

“While the people welcome the positive aspect of the PSC (parliamentary select committee) recommendations, yet the government failed to show commitment to implement some very key demands of Bersih,” he said in a statement here.

“We have about 500,000 party members... Let’s say if we can mobilise 10 per cent of that, or even less than 5 per cent...,” he added when met in Parliament.

The Machang MP said that PKR members would be able to manage themselves well as they have had at least 12 years of experience in such matters under their belts.

It was a “standard operating procedure”, he said, for PKR members to organise themselves into large groups to attend such crucial events.

Saifuddin however stressed that PKR’s participation on Bersih 3.0 does not mean the party is hijacking the rally for political gains, saying that it “respects the autonomy and decision-making of Bersih’s steering committee”.

“We will play our role to encourage our members to attend, however members will attend first and foremost as members of society, citizens of Malaysia,” he said.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers and election watchdog Bersih have been criticising the 22-point recommendations made by the PSC earlier this month to reform the election process.

The PSC was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak following the negative publicity his administration drew for its widespread clampdown on Bersih’s rally last July 9.

Although the nine-member PSC included members from PR’s camp, the pact’s lawmakers have complained that their views were not given adequate consideration in the panel’s final report which was tabled in Parliament on April 2 and subsequently passed without debates.

Unhappy with the PSC’s findings, Bersih recently announced that it will hold yet another rally this April 28 at Dataran Merdeka.

Earlier today, PAS’s national leadership instructed all its members and supporters to attend the rally.

Both PAS and PKR's pledges to mobilise its members add a major boost for the electoral reforms protest movement, which was dismissed earlier today as having very little traction with the public.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein had said earlier today the April 28 rally did not pose a security threat to the nation, adding that the civil rights movement's demands had gained little traction with the public.

"April 28 is not an issue," the home minister told reporters.

He appeared to suggest that the federal government has accommodated the group's demands on electoral issues through the PSC, the repeal of the Internal Security Act (ISA) and even addressed public fears as to radioactive hazards on the Lynas rare earths project in Pahang.

Electoral reforms group Bersih's rally next Saturday is a sequel to its mammoth rally on July 9 last year to raise greater attention to its causes ahead of the 13th general election, widely expected to be called soon ahead of its expiry next March.

Last year, thousands thronged the capital city's streets to march for free and fair elections during a time when gatherings were still deemed illegal without permit from the authorities.

At about midday, riot police fired tear gas and chemical-laced water to disperse protesters who had assembled for an otherwise peaceful event calling for electoral reform.

The clampdown drew negative publicity for the Najib administration in the foreign media, and was seen as the catalyst for a series of reforms announced by the government.

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