

Negative Image From BERSIH Rally
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 5 (Bernama) -- The April 28 BERSIH rally has undoubtedly, put the country in a bad light in the eyes of the world, going by images of violence shown through the various international media.

The opposition pact PKR-DAP-PAS is certainly to be blamed for hijacking the rally by deliberately breaching the police barrier at the Dataran Merdeka. On its part, the opposition is blaming the police for its action in dispersing the crowd.

As pointed out by MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek, the opposition pact used the Bersih rally to threaten, condemn and smear the image of the ruling party, and spread lots of lies, including claiming that the list of voters was tainted.

Many have blamed the organisers for their short-sightedness in not knowing that such a rally could easily be hijacked by parties with varied interests, including opposition parties.

"BERSIH, in terms of organisation skills, does not have any. It depends on political parties such as those from the opposition pact. That's why, the opposition took advantage of the situation to smear Malaysia's image," said MCA Central Committee member Datuk Ti Lian Ker when contacted by Bernama. He said, what happened had raised many questions on the real objective behind BERSIH organising such a rally, including its intention to remove the government through street protests.

"The organisers gave a guarantee that the rally would be peaceful but what happened proved otherwise, when protesters turned violent against the police through acts like turning over and damaging the police car, which was bought using public money, and hitting police personnel on duty," he said.

Senior lawyer and former Bar Council member Roger Tan said the Bersih organisers should be independent and not allow its cause to be taken over or hijacked by any political party, unless it was already planned to be so.

"You must not only be independent but also seen as independent. You cannot allow your cause to be taken over by political parties. Once that happens, you lose all arguments and must accept responsibility," he told Bernama in an interview.

Tan also noted that similar rallies were held at various places throughout the country on the same day, and all turned out to be peaceful.

"But the trigger point was when the barriers to Dataran Merdeka were forcibly removed by the crowd. It was bad when for the first time in Malaysia, pictures and visuals of protesters beating up policemen (in uniform) were flashed all over the world.

"It shows that our people are generally not mature enough to exercise their rights

peacefully," he said.

Tan said the organisers would have a hard time to convince the people that the rally was for the improvement of Malaysia's electoral system when some protesters openly shouted, "Reformasi", a slogan associated with the street protests when PKR de-facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as deputy prime minister.

"I still remember when we started this walk for justice in 2007... (organised) by the Bar Council. The event was almost hijacked by DAP but we told them off, that it was the Bar Council event and the Bar Council must handle it," he added.

Therefore, Tan said, when organising an event or rally such as the one on April 28, the organiser must be mindful of the presence of the 'agent provocateur' who could make the event turn ugly.

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