

BN instigated violence during Bersih to hide issue of attendance, says PAS MP
The Malaysian Insider
May 04, 2012
By Lisa J. Ariffin

SHAH ALAM, May 4 — The Barisan Nasional (BN) federal government instigated violence during last Saturday's Bersih 3.0 protest for electoral reforms to hide the rally's attendance success, Khalid Samad said today.

The PAS MP for Shah Alam said the huge turnout, estimated at 250,000, showed "Bersih 3.0 is most successful in attendance. But unfortunately, the question of attendance was not highlighted and the focus is on the violence instead".

"It was a decision that was made to divert the issue and avoid the situation where the government will have to handle the crisis of confidence, and the possibilities of more Bersih's being held [sic]," he told a press conference here.

"If it was peaceful, and nothing is taken, Bersih 4, Bersih 5, Bersih 6 can happen again. This is a problem they want to avoid," he added.

Khalid (picture) believes the "historic attendance" showed "a serious crisis of confidence of the people towards the electoral process and the government must address this".

"The attendance is proof that all efforts by BN to convince the people that the election is fair, the electoral roll is clean and the Election Commission is not biased have been rejected by the people."

Khalid said the federal government must acknowledge the success of Bersih and address the people's demands for free and fair elections.

He stressed that national polls should not be called before reforms are implemented.

"Otherwise, the election will be disputed and it may lead to very serious consequences like the legitimacy of government in the eyes of people, in terms of unity of the people," he said.

"Elections are supposed to be the mechanism to solve the question of a nation's leadership through peaceful means, through consensus and respect. Once you have this crisis of confidence towards the whole electoral process, the whole purpose of the mechanism is defeated," he added.

Khalid said it would lead to "a very serious national problem".

"Handle it. Don't hide it. Don't deny an attendance of that many."

Chaos reigned on the streets of Kuala Lumpur for over four hours after 3pm last Saturday when police fired tear gas and water cannons and chased protesters down the streets of the capital to disperse what had initially started out as a peaceful protest calling for free and fair

elections.

The violence has resulted in finger-pointing by all parties involved, even as police investigations are being carried out.

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