

**Pakatan denies Bersih 3.0 was to topple BN**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers have denied allegations that the Bersih 3.0 rally was their attempt to overthrow the government, insisting they would never resort to unconstitutional means to claim Putrajaya.

PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar today said the “hilarious” allegations were made by “comedians” who had made the global community laugh at Malaysia.

“I am saying it is comical because Bersih 3.0 participants had come out with salt and mineral water.

“If we had wanted to overthrow the government, we would have brought weapons and we would not have gone to Dataran Merdeka, we would have gone to Putrajaya,” he told a press conference.

“This is really hilarious to us and to the world.”

The Pokok Sena MP added that government leaders were now in a state of worry over the uprising of their own people, who are merely gunning for free and fair elections, and not to overthrow the administration through unlawful means.

He pointed out that during Bersih’s first two rallies in 2007 and last year, the government had not once mentioned attempts of a coup by its supporters.

“These are merely efforts to create fear among the people towards the possibility of a change in government in the coming polls.

“But here I want the government to focus on the key objectives of Bersih 3.0 — free and fair elections,” he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had on Friday claimed that Bersih 3.0 was not merely a movement to demand clean elections but an attempt to overthrow the current government.

His predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad went a step further and accused long-time arch nemesis Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim of teaming up with PAS’s Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat to overthrow the present government through “Bersih-type violent demonstrations”.

“This is completely baseless and untrue, (it is) ridiculous for him (Najib) to make such a claim.

“Pakatan Rakyat has never thought of unconstitutional means to overthrow the government. The only way we would gain power is through the ballot box,” DAP socialist youth (Dapsy) chief Anthony Loke told *The Malaysian Insider*.

Loke stressed that all PR parties — PAS, PKR and the DAP — have always supported and upheld the concept of a fair, democratic election process.

“If we wanted to overthrow the government, we would have done it long ago,” the Rasah MP added.

"I tweeted yesterday I can't imagine the prime minister would stoop so low, I even went so far to say 'the people are not idiotic'.

"From the start, it has been very clear that the intention of Bersih was to strictly gather from 2 to 4pm. The timeline was clear, where on earth did they get the imagination that we wanted to occupy Dataran Merdeka for days?" he told *The Malaysian Insider*, saying that the prime minister's claims were at best "extremely irresponsible" and "very seditious."

The PAS central working committee (CWC) member also accused Dr Mahathir of trying to brand PAS as a "Islamic extremist" party by claiming Nik Aziz supported violent demonstrations to overthrow BN.

PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar likened Najib's claims to the "standard rhetoric" of someone who governed with a "police state-like" mindset, and demanded the PM furnish proof to back his allegation.

"Are we now expected to swallow Najib's allegations without so much as documentary proof? If there is evidence of the so-called insurrection then the government should produce it," she told *The Malaysian Insider*.

Asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's remarks, the Lembah Pantai MP said: "Dr M's allegation is nothing new. It is relevant as far as showcasing his attempt at helping BN to spin the Bersih rally and deflect from his former administration's failings to address electoral reforms. After all, the BN should not expect any less from the puppet master."

She said that a full investigation by the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) was crucial to uncover the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force by the police against Bersih protesters on April 28.

Bersih has already denied that it had amassed thousands to the streets of the capital last Saturday to overthrow the government, rejecting the hardline position taken by the Najib administration against its push for greater electoral reform.

The election watchdog, which has in the past repeatedly denied being pro-opposition, insisted that Bersih 3.0's objectives were purely to demand a clean and fair polls process.

"Bersih wants free and fair elections.

"It is our wish that any changes to those who will ultimately represent us in government be made through the ballot box in elections that are clean and fair," the 84-member coalition had said.

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PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar

Najib had on Thursday appeared to blame Bersih 3.0 organisers for last Saturday's violence, saying if the group had accepted the government's Stadium Merdeka offer, "these things would not have happened at all".

He said the gathering for free and fair elections would have been peaceful if it had been held at the stadium as the authorities would have facilitated the event.

But Bersih insisted that based on medical reports of those detained during the event, the violent clashes between protesters and police personnel were likely instigated by the latter group.

Foreign media reports of Bersih's demonstrations have painted the Malaysian authorities in a negative light for their purportedly hard-handed tactics in attempting to disperse protesters.

The Bersih 3.0 rally, which had begun peacefully enough, resulted in much the same way as Bersih 2.0 last July 9, with riot police seen chasing citizens on the streets of the capital amid the chaotic mix of clouds of tear gas, chemical-laced water and warning bells from police trucks.

The electoral reform movement has continued to show its dissatisfaction with the government's attempts and promises to reform the country's election processes, despite the formation of a parliamentary panel to look into the matter.

What Bersih has been demanding is that all aspects of the country's polls processes, particularly the present electoral roll, be cleaned in order to ensure that the government is democratically elected into power.

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