

**Anwar: Najib cannot differentiate between Bersih 3.0 and Egypt uprising**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 8 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has accused Datuk Seri Najib Razak of misrepresenting Bersih 3.0's objectives to Malaysians by comparing it with last year's uprising in Egypt's Tahrir Square.

Bersih 3.0, the third protest by the election watchdog, was held on April 28 at Dataran Merdeka here to demand commitment from the government to ensure the coming polls are clean and conducted fairly.

In Egypt, Tahrir Square was the focal point of the nation's revolution, where thousands occupied the venue for days to rally for the fall of former President Hosni Mubarak.

In the days following Bersih 3.0, Najib appeared to draw similarities between the two events when he said the electoral reform movement had wanted more than just clean protests — it wanted to overthrow the government.

"Therefore, he used former national police chiefs and even the National Fatwa Council (to confuse the people over Bersih's requests)," Anwar was quoted in the daily as saying at a ceramah in Padang Kampung Baru, Batu Caves last night.

The event was part of the federal opposition's platform to ensure that the Bersih 3.0 momentum is maintained ahead of the coming 13th general election.

Over the weekend the National Fatwa Council had declared it "haram" for Muslims to participate in assemblies considered unlawful or that would result in chaos and the destruction of public property.

But Anwar, citing his favourite Islamic scholar Dr Yusuf Al-Qardawi, insisted that demonstrations for good reasons were not banned by Islam.

"His book titled 'Taurah Syaar' speaks of the people's uprising.

"The council's claim has also been answered in its first chapter.

"There are those who say demonstrations are not a part of Islamic culture, not Arab culture and were imported from elsewhere but Qardawi said the words in the Quran meant 'we must co-operate in spreading goodness'..." the Malay daily quoted Anwar as saying.

When responding to the fatwa yesterday, PAS leaders and its ulama wing dismissed it as narrow-thinking.

The Islamist party also pointed out that Bersih 3.0's objectives were good and demonstrators had not participated to spread violence as they were only armed with bottles of water and salt instead of weapons.

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