

**Putrajaya says Pakatan incited Bersih supporters to violence**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, June 12 — The federal government accused the federal opposition today of provoking protestors at the April 28 rally for free and fair elections to "be aggressive" and defy a court order barring them from Dataran Merdeka.

This comes after the Najib administration had claimed last month Bersih was an attempted coup and there were elements in the rally which wanted death and bloodshed.

The home ministry said during question time in Parliament this morning it had deployed 9,274 policemen on the day "based on information we gathered that we would face threats from demonstrators."

"In a countdown event on April 26, the opposition and NGOs incited over 3,000 who attended to be aggressive," Deputy Home Minister Datuk Abu Seman Yusop said, adding that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders told participants to "take Dataran Merdeka if it is only guarded by police."

The Masjid Tanah MP said that it had information that volunteers from PAS's Unit Amal, PKR's Angkatan Tentera Muda and DAP's Action Team (DAPAT) were told "whatever happens, they would be in Dataran Merdeka."

"Even though there was barbed wire set up by police and City Hall, they would cut it and break through," he said.

He added that during the rally, protestors hurled bottles, helmets and stones at police as well as insults of "pigs, dogs, animals."

Ipoh Timor MP Lim Kit Siang responded to the deputy minister's answer today by pointing out that police fired "three times as many tear gas canisters" compared to a similar Bersih rally on July 9, 2011, proving that "excessive and disproportionate force" by police was what caused the violence.

"This demonisation campaign is an insult to the hundreds of thousands (who attended)," the DAP parliamentary leader said over shouts by Barisan Nasional (BN) backbenchers of "racist Ipoh Timor, May 13, who caused it?"

But Abu Seman said "many came out only because the opposition incited them to be aggressive."

The planned sit-in at the historic square had ended up in chaos as police and protestors clashed for over four hours which has resulted in the government and rally organisers blaming each other for the violence.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has also accused Bersih of an attempted coup and Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein has said there were elements in the rally which wanted death and bloodshed.

Umno' Sri Gading MP Datuk Mohamad Aziz also directly accused Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

yesterday of planning bloodshed and death at the rally.

Police have made public video recordings showing Anwar, PKR deputy president Azmin Ali and the party's Rembau chief Badrul Hisham Shaharin exchanging signals to each other just minutes before the barricade was breached by another PKR grassroots leader.

But Anwar and Azmin have denied ordering protestors to enter Dataran Merdeka, insisting they were only discussing negotiations with police to allow protestors to enter the historic square.

The duo along with Badrul Hisham have since been charged with participating and organising an illegal street protest under the Peaceful Assembly Act after being accused by Barisan Nasional (BN) and even some Bersih supporters of endangering lives of rally-goers.

The government has set up a panel to investigate the April 28 violence, but the choice of former police chief Tun Hanif Omar has been widely criticised after he compared the movement to communism and accused the organisers of an attempted coup.

The April 28 rally that saw tens of thousands gather at six different locations before heading to Dataran Merdeka was peaceful until about 2.30pm when Bersih chief Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan asked the crowd to disperse.

But her announcement was not heard by most of the crowd who persisted to linger around the historic square which the court had already barred to the public over the weekend.

Just before 3pm, some protestors breached the barricade surrounding the landmark, leading police to disperse the crowd with tear gas and water cannons.

Police then continued to pursue rally-goers down several streets amid chaotic scenes which saw violence from both sides over the next four hours.

Several dozen demonstrators have claimed that they were assaulted by groups of over 10 policemen at a time and visual evidence appears to back their claim but police also point to violence from rally-goers who attacked a police car.

The police car then crashed into a building before some protestors flipped it on its side.

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