

Treason is giving away citizenship for votes, says Ambiga
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 — Treason is giving away citizenship for votes at the ballot box and not asking for clean elections, Bersih chief Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan said today, a day after an Umno MP called for her to be hanged.

The prominent lawyer-activist has led the call for the federal government to reform the election process and rid voter roll of dubious entries, for which she has been repeatedly branded a "traitor" by right-wing elements within the pro-Barisan Nasional (BN) establishment. They have also demanded for her citizenship to be stripped.

But an Umno lawmaker went a step further yesterday and called for Ambiga (picture) to be hanged for pushing electoral reforms through two street demonstrations, which the Najib administration has said was a bid to topple the government.

"Shouldn't we also hang Ambiga for treason towards the (Yang diPertuan) Agong? Traitors should be punished as harshly as possible," Sri Gading MP Datuk Mohamad Aziz said in Parliament last night, referring to the violent spectacle in the nation's capital after the April 28 Bersih rally.

The four-term federal lawmaker had compared Ambiga to leaders of the Al-Ma'unah militants who tried to overthrow the government in 2000 and were eventually sentenced to death by hanging for "waging war against the King," the first people to be convicted of the offence.

"Off with her head!!' Sounds like Alice in Wonderland! The statement, of course, reflects more on the maker than on me," Ambiga said in response to Mohamad's remark.

"But seriously, I have a question for this MP. Are the reforms sought by Bersih going to be fully implemented before the 13th GE?" she asked, in an emailed reply to The Malaysian Insider.

She pointed out that the rumoured early 13th general election no longer appeared to be on the cards, allowing the Najib administration time to meet Bersih's eight demands, which include cleaning up the electoral roll ahead of polls.

"The offer by civil society to help with the cleaning up of the electoral roll still stands, and as he is an elected MP, I believe the public would be more interested in his response to these critical questions," Ambiga said.

She added: "As for treason, asking for free and fair elections is not treason. Giving away citizenship for votes is."

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