

Bersih wants Australia to ensure peaceful, fair polls in Malaysia
Malaysian Insider
April 8, 2013
By Boo Su-Lyn

KUALA LUMPUR, April 8 — Polls watchdog Bersih urged Canberra today to ensure a peaceful and fair Election 2013 in Malaysia, pointing out that violent incidents have increased in the lead-up to the polls.

Global Bersih — the international arm of Bersih 2.0 — also said that it would similarly call on Britain and the United Nations to address the violence and allegations of tainted electoral rolls ahead of the 13th general election, which is expected to be the most keenly-contested in recent times.

“Given Australia’s claim in upholding democratic values and political freedoms in the region following its new membership of the United Nation’s Security Council, Australia’s ALP government and Senator Carr (Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr) have an obligation to publicly call on Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak and his Umno-led Barisan Nasional (BN) government to respect and observe free and fair elections in practice as well as in principle,” said Global Bersih in a statement.

Putrajaya, however, deported independent Australian Senator Nick Xenophon last February shortly after he arrived in Kuala Lumpur to review the country’s electoral system.

Global Bersih also pointed out that no action has been taken after death threats were issued against the opposition.

“When Malaysia’s Parliament was dissolved on April 3, Najib’s Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi wrote on Twitter: ‘We shall move to the warzone to kill all adverse political intruders,’” said Global Bersih.

Umno party workers also shouted “Kill Tian Chua” during a gathering last month when Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein urged them to rally behind BN and “eliminate traitors” like PKR vice-president Chua Tian Chang, better known as Tian Chua, whose Pakatan Rakyat (PR) allies have been accused of instigating the Sulu incursion in Sabah.

Najib and his coalition have come under fire for their muted response to several violent attacks on the opposition recently, allegedly perpetrated by BN supporters or members of hardline groups linked to Umno.

PR MPs Nurul Izzah Anwar and Charles Santiago also failed in their recent attempts to get the court to compel the Election Commission (EC) to clean up the electoral rolls in their Lembah Pantai and Klang constituencies respectively.

“Australia can and must play a critical role in ensuring a close UN member, Commonwealth friend and long-standing ally like Malaysia heeds its democratic obligations and respects the rights of its citizens without resorting to widespread violence, intimidation and electoral fraud,” said Global Bersih.

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bersih-wants-australia-to-ensure-peaceful-fair-polls-in-malaysia/>