

Najib regime's security dragnet will not frighten Malaysians, Bersih 2.0 says
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 25 — Oppression and intimidation by the Najib regime will not cow Malaysians into submission, polls reform group Bersih 2.0 warned today as it called on the government to stop its nationwide clampdown on opposition supporters.

Election 2013 saw the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition returned to power with 133 seats in the 222-set Parliament despite only winning the minority vote. — File picThe group said the recent spate of arrests of key Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders and activists was the regime's attempt to silent critics of the just-concluded general election, which it maintained was tainted by irregularities, unethical practices and "blatant cheating".

"Those detained are Malaysians who dare to voice out what have frustrated and angered most Malaysians since the conclusion of the 13th general election," Bersih 2.0 said in a statement here.

"We thus call upon the BN government and the police to immediately end all persecution."

Election 2013 saw the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition returned to power with 133 seats in the 222-set Parliament despite only winning the minority vote.

Pointing to its popular vote score at 51 per cent to BN's 47 per cent, PR leaders immediately accused its political foes of stealing the elections with fraud and widespread cheating.

The results also sparked the series of "Black 505" rallies nationwide where tens of thousands of supporters have turned up to protest the results of the polls.

The newly-minted BN government under second-term prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak responded by flexing its muscles at the opposition, mounting a widespread clampdown to quell opposition dissent.

Several rally organisers have been hauled up to face the book for allegedly contravening the Peaceful Assembly Act 2011.

"Party organs of the three [PR] parties of PKR, PAS and DAP have been confiscated," Bersih 2.0 observed.

"Thugs sympathetic to BN have been to open air gatherings organized by civil society to create trouble and to scare speakers and participants from further engaging in their struggles for a clean and fair electoral system, deemed so key to a genuine democracy," it alleged.

It also pointed to the arrest and use of the Sedition Act to charge student activist Adam Adli earlier this week, and the subsequent detentions of PKR MP Chua Tian Chang, PAS leader Tamrin Ghafar and activist Haris Ibrahim.

All four were hauled in for allegedly uttering seditious remarks by calling on Malaysians to topple the government through street protests.

But Bersih 2.0 said the charges were trumped up, tailored merely to persecute those who dared to expose the manipulations they alleged were perpetrated by BN and the Election Commission (EC) during the May 5 polls.

"Bersih 2.0 is, however, confident that such oppression and intimidation will not succeed," he said.

"On the contrary, Malaysians will rise up to oppose oppression, intimidation, corruption, torture and gross violation of human rights as perpetrated by the Najib regime.

"They will not relent until there is justice, democracy and equality in Malaysia."

Another rally, called the "Himpunan Suara Rakyat 505" will be held this evening outside Amcorp Mall in Petaling Jaya.

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