

**Bersih People's Tribunal funded by public, Ambiga tells Tengku Adnan
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The Malaysian public is funding the Bersih People's Tribunal to determine whether the last general election was fair and free, said Bersih co-chairman Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan yesterday.

She said public support for its effort was overwhelming as the tribunal is on a fact-finding mission to establish the truth.

"Truth can never destroy a nation. What destroys a country is corruption, abuse of power, racism and dishonesty," she added.

Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor wanted Bersih to reveal its source of funds.

The five-day tribunal started at a hotel in Subang Jaya on Wednesday and will conclude today.

Bersih had invited Tengku Adnan and the Election Commission (EC) to participate in the proceedings but both declined.

Ambiga yesterday again extended Bersih's invitation to Tengku Adnan to answer to the issues raised in the tribunal and in the media.

"He is entitled to bring with him legal representation. We are particularly interested in his earlier statement that Bangladeshi citizens may have voted in Putrajaya," she said.

Adnan, who is also Putrajaya MP and Federal Territories Minister, had accused the electoral watchdog of wanting to destroy the nation and questioned its source of funding.

He asked Ambiga where she obtained the funds to organise the People's Tribunal.

"I want to ask Ambiga, where is she getting the money (from)?"

"Sometimes, there are certain masterminds that supposedly use the name of Bersih as an NGO but in fact, are out to destroy this country," he told journalists in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Tengku Adnan had previously turned down Bersih's invitation to participate in the tribunal, and even alleged that the movement had ferried Bangladeshis to vote in Putrajaya.

Since the tribunal started, people from all walks of life have come forward to testify to reinforce Bersih's arguments that the electoral process needs a major revamp.

"They have not been given a chance and if it was not for the tribunal, their stories would never have been heard," Ambiga said, pointing out how six Orang Asli travelled for about half-a-day from Pahang to Kuala Lumpur to testify at the tribunal early last week.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail and EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said that the tribunal was merely a "publicity stunt" with no legal grounds to make an impact.

"Yes, we have no legal standing but these are Malaysians who want to defend their rights. The fact that the testimonies are coming from the people is what gives it power," Ambiga had said in defence. – September 22, 2013

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