

**Both sides breached campaign laws in Kajang, says Bersih
Malaysian Insider**

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BY ELIZABETH ZACHARIAH

Electoral reforms coalition Bersih 2.0 today accused both Pakatan Rakyat and Barisan Nasional of election misconduct in the days leading to the Kajang by-election, and said the Election Commission (EC) is to blame for not taking action and allowing it to continue.

Its chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah said the EC was not addressing election misconduct seriously and has allowed it to continue to happen.

"Conduct of the elections must be monitored by the EC and so far, they have not performed well," she told The Malaysian Insider, responding to a report in Utusan Malaysia quoting the Selangor deputy police chief, who said described events which features PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Kajang over the past week as illegal.

He said the police themselves had made a police report and were investigating Anwar for breaching the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012, adding that police were also acting on reports by some residents and statements from BN friendly parties.

Anwar, the PKR candidate for the Kajang by-election, has been addressing gatherings in the area to explain the party's "Kajang move".

Maria however said both sides had started the campaign.

"BN started with threats and smear campaigns," she said, citing a "threat" to the Chinese voters in Kajang by former minister Tan Sri Zainuddin Maidin.

Zainuddin had said that the Chinese have a "golden opportunity" to regain the trust of the Malays following the "Chinese tsunami" in the 13th general election last year.

Bersih said Zainuddin's remarks could also be seen as flouting election laws.

Maria, however, acknowledged that the EC had spoken up against Umno information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan for announcing a "sex and smut" campaign as part of BN's strategy in the upcoming by-election.

"The EC eventually said something here.

"Bersih 2.0 is concerned that the EC will not conduct a free and fair by-election if it continues to remain silent on crucial electoral issues," she added.

Earlier Anwar denied breaking the law by campaigning early for the seat and insisted that it was the BN which had launched an aggressive campaign against him through the media.

The EC has set March 23 as polling date, and nomination day on March 11. – February 10, 2014.

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