

'BERSIH! BERSIH! BERSIH!' OR 'TURUN, NAJIB! TURUN!'

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By Super Admin

A more appropriately named rally may have addressed inequities in participation.

Fa Abdul, Free Malaysia Today

I was going through some of my notifications on Facebook the other day when I came across pictures of my friends joining the Bersih 4 rally. As expected, there were lots of selfies but one picture in particular, caught my attention – a picture of rally goers trying to collect one million signatures for the release of former Opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim.

It got me thinking – what has this got to do with Bersih 4?

While that was lingering on my mind, I received a message from a reader who shared his personal insights about the rally after reading one of my articles. The following are excerpts from his message to me:

“Having been to all four Bersih rallies, the latest one was the most disappointing not because of the lack of attendance by the Malays or Muslims but due to the ignorance shown by some of the Bersih supporters towards the demands championed by Bersih. I was quite surprised when I asked a few youths about the BERSIH events and what it was all about. The response I received among others were:

“Turunkan Najib, bebaskan Anwar”

“To protect the fundamental rights of Malaysians”

“I’m not sure, I’m just following my friends”

(Ahmad Syauqi Hamzah)

With all the excitement created before, during and after Bersih 4, I started to wonder how many of the thousands of rally goers actually knew the objectives of Bersih 4. So I contacted some friends, acquaintances and followers who were supporters of the event.

What I found wasn’t surprising at all – almost 80% said Bersih 4 was about forcing Najib to step down. A few claimed it was about solving the 1MDB mystery. Others thought it was a call to overthrow the government.

Not many people knew that Bersih 4’s actual demands were (1) Clean elections, (2) Clean government, (3) Right to dissent, (4) Strengthening parliamentary democracy and (5) Saving the economy.

The truth is, for many ordinary Malaysians who came from all corners, wearing yellow shirts, and having painted their faces, nails and even their chest hair in yellow, the rally was to demand that the Prime Minister step down. This was evident from the hundreds of cardboards and banners seen during the rally which read “Najib has to go” and “Tangkap Najib”.

Even Bersih 2.0 Chairperson, Maria Chin Abdullah wrote on her Facebook recently, “Our goals are clear and focussed. We want reforms but Najib has to go because he had failed to resolve not just the 1MDB but is embroiled into interfering with investigation on himself. Therefore the call to the MPs to push the boundaries to call for a vote of no confidence is not just populist but it’s a call to our MPs to not be in denial – they must show leadership & integrity.”

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