

Have guts to face MPs in Dewan Rakyat, Bersih tells Najib
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By V. Anbalagan

Datuk Seri Najib Razak must show respect to voters by answering questions about him and his administration in the Dewan Rakyat, electoral reform group Bersih 2.0 chairman Maria Chin Abdullah said.

"Have the courage to go the house and answer all questions posed by the wakil rakyat (people's representatives)," she said, adding that it would be better if a special session was held for the prime minister to take questions.

Maria said this in response to Najib who took to his website on Sunday to refute some of the key accusations made by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

She also took issue with Najib's claim that Barisan Nasional (BN) had performed better in the last general election in 2013 (GE13), saying the results favouring the BN were because of gerrymandering and malapportionment.

The elections reform activist said Najib's use of his blog to reply to criticism was "one-way traffic" as the public could not get immediate answers to follow-up questions.

"As prime minister of Malaysia, he must avail himself to supplementary question raised, not only by the opposition but also backbenchers," she told The Malaysian Insider.

She said Najib must show respect to the Dewan Rakyat because it was the voters who had sent each of the 222 elected representatives, including the prime minister, to Parliament through the ballot box.

She said the questions raised by Dr Mahathir were also issues of concern for most Malaysians.

"I have no problem if the prime minister wants to use his blog for his own rant against private individuals but the issues that beg answers are of public concern," she said.

In the FAQ section of his blog NajibRazak.com, Najib listed 13 issues and claims that have been raised against him and his administration. These ranged from the murder of Mongolian interpreter Altantuya Shaariibuu to use of government jets and BN winning the next general election.

Najib also refuted Dr Mahathir's accusation that he performed worse than his immediate predecessor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in GE13 by losing more parliamentary seats.

Najib said in 2013, BN defeated PAS to regain the Kedah government and maintained

its hold on Perak, which the opposition had won in the 12th general election in 2008.

Umno also won more seats in 13th general election, Najib had said.

However, Maria said BN won the elections because the Election Commission did not conduct the polls in a free and fair manner.

"This was the conclusion of the People's Tribunal report after the elections," she said, adding that the EC and BN were invited to present their cases before the bench but refused to accept the offer.

She said the outcome of the elections could have been different if there was no gerrymandering and malapportionment.

"Najib is leading a minority government because only 47% of the electorate voted for BN although the coalition won more seats than the opposition," she added.

BN secured 133 seats, seven fewer than in the 2008 elections, while the opposition Pakatan Rakyat won 89 seats.

Before answering criticism through his blog, Najib had told a crowd in Kota Belud, Sabah, on a working visit to the state on May 10 that he would not bow to pressure to resign, saying he would stay in office as long as Umno members supported him.

The next day after a meeting of Umno's powerful decision-making body, the Supreme Council, Najib said the council had renewed its support for him as president and also for deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is the deputy prime minister.

But Najib is now facing calls for him to face elected representatives, with PKR's Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli telling him yesterday to answer questions in the Dewan Rakyat on 1Malaysia Development Bhd and whether he would stay on as prime minister. – May 19, 2015.

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