

**GHB says not to blame for lack of Malays in Bersih 4, more on second day**  
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Gerakan Harapan Baru (GHB), or New Hope Movement, should not be blamed for failing to attract more Malays to join the Bersih 4 rally over the weekend because the movement's struggle is not just for the Malays, but for all races, its vice-chairman Salahudin Ayub said.

He admitted that it was true that Umno and PAS – both parties that represented Malays and Islam – did not mobilise their members to join the rally, causing the majority of participants representing the Chinese community.

"It is true that on the first day, some 80% to 90% of the participants were Chinese. But on the second day yesterday, the presence of Malays clearly made up 40% of the crowd."

Salahudin also said that in previous rallies, it was the progressive leaders in PAS who had mobilised the party members and supporters to take part.

However, PAS decided not to send its members to the ground this time.

"When we were in PAS, we were the ones who brought the members and supporters to join the rallies. Now we fight for all races, not just the Malays," he told The Malaysian Insider.

GHB – a splinter group helmed by PAS progressive leaders who are trying to form a new political party – has been accused of failing to bring Malays and Muslims to the rally organised by electoral reform group Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections, Bersih 2.0, on Saturday and Sunday.

This has raised questions whether the movement will be able to deliver Malay voters to support the soon-to-be set up opposition pact, dubbed Pakatan Rakyat 2.0, come the next general election.

Pakatan Rakyat 2.0 is the new opposition pact that will take over the now disbanded Pakatan Rakyat (PR) to fight Barisan Nasional.

PR recently collapsed after PAS – having ousted its progressive leaders in the party polls this year and now controlled by the ulama faction – severed ties with DAP over the hudud issue.

In the run-up to Bersih 4, the Islamist party's top leadership had sent mixed signals about its participation in the rally aimed at demanding for reforms and the resignation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang was initially quoted by Berita Harian as

saying that PAS members were not to join the rally, but during the final week before the event, vice-president Datuk Iskandar Abdul Samad said the party was not stopping its members from taking part, rebutting claims that the party would not support the gathering.

GHB secretary Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad also rejected the accusation that the movement had failed in its task, pointing out that the Malay presence at the rally was evident on the second day, namely last night as the 34-hour event came to a close.

"Malays were cautious of the various propagandas by the ruling government that they did not show up on the first day (Saturday), especially after threats from many parties.

"But after things proceeded smoothly on the first day, they started to join on the second day. They attended Bersih 4 in very significant numbers," he told The Malaysian Insider.

Dzulkefly said GHB achieved a huge success in Bersih 4 because it replaced PAS on the main stage of national politics after the Islamist party gave the gathering a miss.

"Our success is that we were on the main stage in fighting for national issues."

Compared with the first day of Bersih 4, more Malays flooded Dataran Merdeka and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman from yesterday afternoon right until the rally ended at midnight.

DAP national publicity secretary Tony Pua did not deny that there were fewer Malays in the crowd this time because PAS did not send its people.

"Give GHB time to set up officially," he told the public in his speech near Menara Maybank during the rally.

GHB – now functioning as a non-governmental organisation led by former PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu – is expected to announce its new party this afternoon.

It is expected that the new party will have an Islamic foundation but open to all races, and will be formed officially on September 16, coinciding with Malaysia Day. – August 31, 2015.

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