

Najib accuses Bersih of double standards over funding disclosure
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By Eileen Ng

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today accused Bersih 2.0 of practising double standards on funding disclosure as the electoral reform group did not divulge the identities of their donors after they raised more than RM2 million in the run up to the Bersih 4 rally two weekends ago.

"When Bersih collected money and funds, there were requests for them to unveil their sources but they refused.

"When it comes to us, however, they questioned all kinds of things. We can't have double standards," said the Umno president after chairing the party's supreme council meeting today.

Najib, who is also the prime minister, is currently under fire for the RM2.6 billion "donation" from an unknown Middle Eastern benefactor who deposited the money into the prime minister's personal bank accounts ahead of the 13th general election in 2013.

He said the Supreme Council today took note that there is no existing laws to regulate political funding and there is no need to make any disclosure from a legal standpoint, as it is accepted that all political parties, including the opposition received such contributions.

He reiterated that this was why he had proposed four years ago the need for legislation on political funding but claimed that this was not agreed upon by opposition parties.

"In future, I hope we can have a new law to regulate political funding and contributions," Najib said.

Najib had previously announced the formation of a national consultative committee on political financing, headed by minister in charge of governance and integrity, Datuk Paul Low, to develop a plan to ensure transparency and governance concerning party funds to ensure healthy politics.

He had said an action plan to cover political funding would be developed to cover institutional change, monitoring, new regulations and law enforcement.

It was reported that this will take about a year to draw up and will be in use before the 14th general election, expected to be held in 2018. – September 9, 2015

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