

## **BN was right about Bersih, says Tawfik Ismail**

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**By Sheith Khidhir Bin Abu Bakar**

PETALING JAYA: Tawfik Ismail has criticised Bersih 2.0 after its chairman Maria Chin Abdullah announced she would be leaving the electoral reform group to join politics.

In a press invite given last night, Maria said she would be offering herself as an independent candidate to Pakatan Harapan (PH) for the coming general election (GE14).

Speaking to FMT, Tawfik, who was formerly Sungai Benut MP, said the decision confirmed Barisan Nasional's (BN) suspicions that the NGO was not as independent as it claimed to be.

"It's expected. It only confirms BN's view that Bersih is led and hijacked by the opposition," he said.

Tawfik also questioned whether Bersih 2.0 would be able to gain as much traction as it had in the past following Maria's announcement, asking how its supporters would react to the news considering that PH was now led by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"What's the future of Bersih? When it began, it rallied a broad spectrum of people.

"Now, instead of reforming the government, its leader has gone to the side of the man that inspired Bersih's establishment, Mahathir."

Bersih came to prominence with its first rally calling for electoral reforms ahead of the 2008 general election. The coalition brings together civil society groups, and has been behind several mammoth rallies in Kuala Lumpur.

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