

Two Open Letters to All Papas and Mamas

Written by straits-mongrel

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By Angie Ng First published on Facebook

To Mamas who worry about Papas going to BERSIH 3.0 Duduk Bantah:

It was a fine day when suddenly your loving husband, he who is always home in time for dinner, a good father to the kids, told you he will be joining Bersih 3.0. You were shocked.

“For goodness sake!” you said. “Don’t you remember how they shot people with tear gas and chemical-laced water? And more than 1,000 people were arrested during Bersih 2.0? What if something happens to you? What about me and the kids? The rally will still go on without you; they won’t know the difference... Don’t go and stay away from trouble!”

We know you love your husband, and you hope he understands your concern. However, have you tried to understand what is going through his head? During last year’s BERSIH 2.0, you saw him weep in front of his computer. Why?

He was touched to see how Malaysians stood up, hand-in-hand, regardless of their status and skin colour. He saw how people stood up as Malaysians to brave the tear gas, water cannon and FRUs. He had goosebumps when he heard people singing “Negaraku” that day. He has been singing “Negaraku” since he first learnt the song but he never realized how much more meaningful and beautiful the lyrics are when we sing it out loud with love for our country. At that moment, he wasn’t happy at all for staying at home comfortably in front of his computer. He was sad for not standing there, fighting with fellow Malaysians for a better future! Those sprayed by water cannons, they have wives, parents and families too. Some even left a will for their families. If anything happened to him, his wife or his family will take care of his business. They were afraid, too! Still, they stood proudly in front of tear gas and water cannons. At that moment, did you know your husband was ashamed for not being there?

He decided to join this coming BERSIH 3.0. He is doing it for you, for your kids, for the place he calls HOME. With all the corruption and abuse of power, we all long for change in this country. However, we can’t do it through a dirty and biased election. Take a look at our beautiful country. We can’t afford for her to be contaminated by radioactive waste, and we can’t raise our children in such a place! We have no choice. We can’t do it alone, but with each and every one of us, we can steer the ship.

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Instead of telling him not to join BERSIH 3.0, join him for the walk, hand-in-hand, for the sake of your children's future. This is way more meaningful compared to an expensive candle-light dinner. If you are not willing to go, I sincerely hope you can support his determination. Make him a flask of herbal tea, or a bottle of water; prepare a small towel and a nice cap for him to bring to Dataran Merdeka. Give him a big hug at the door, tell him he is your hero and your children will be proud of him. Ask him to be careful and stay safe for the sake of you and your children. And you'll cook him a nice meal when he comes back.

Believe me, he will be the happiest man in the world, because of you - the most understanding wife in the world!

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To Papas who worry about Mamas going to Bersih 3.0 Duduk Bantah:

We all know why BERSIH 3.0 must happen. You read the newspapers every day, watch the news on TV every night, you know why. At home, your wife is busy running around, taking care of everyone at home, making sure the kids are well fed and have enough clothing to keep them warm, battling to get rid of all the dust in every corner of the house. She is doing everything she can to take care of her family and give them all the love she has.

All of a sudden, she began to be aware and be concerned about this country. All of a sudden, she said she is joining the BERSIH 3.0 rally on 28th April. You probably do not understand why. Isn't she aware of how dangerous it could be? Isn't she afraid of being caught? She must be crazy! She must be brainwashed by those friends she met on Facebook! She is just too naive and too impulsive!

Well, probably you are NOT aware of this: She IS aware of the risk, how things might turn ugly on that day. But she also knows that this country is on her way to becoming a failed state when the election process is tainted and highly dangerous industries make Malaysia their radioactive waste dumping site. Of course she is afraid of getting caught! But she also fears that, in the future, her children are allowed to be detained under draconian laws without any reason! She also fears her children will lose their freedom of speech and their freedom to gather peacefully! These are reasons enough to make a mother take the street!

If you say she is brainwashed by her friends, you are hurting her feelings. You love her, you married her, you know her and you admire her... Do you really think she is such an ignorant woman, who can't think independently and make decisions without her own stand?

Trust her. Even if you don't, please let her take a day off, so she can go out to do something she feels is right. When she returns, you'll know that she is not just an ordinary housewife. She is wise and she has vision. You should feel proud that she is not some "tai-tai" who only asks her husband to buy her expensive handbags.

Thank you for being so understanding.