

An Asian Joint Statement Calling for the Release of Maria Chin Abdullah, Chairperson of BERSIH2.0

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We, the May18 Memorial Foundation and the Laureates of the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights, are deeply alarmed by the detention of Maria Chin Abdullah, the Chairperson of BERSIH2.0 by the Malaysian Police. BERSIH2.0 is the 2016's Laureates of the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights presented by the May18 Memorial Foundation.

We are aware that Bersih2.0 is an organization which is engaged in a legitimate struggle to establish free and fair elections, clean government, and the right to dissent. The rally on 19 November, 2016 to campaign for the above-mentioned objective was completed peacefully without any violence and with the support of a large gathering. It is regrettable that the Malaysian Government raided the office of BERSIH2.0 the day before the rally and arrested Maria, and Mandeep Singh, the Secretariat Manager of BERSIH2.0, and other activists. While some of those who have been arrested have been released, Maria Chin Abdullah is being held in detention under the Security Offences Special Measures Act (SOSMA).

As persons committed to the promotion of democracy and human rights, we are gravely concerned about the grave obstacles placed in the way of Malaysians who demand clean and fair elections and clean government which are basic rights guaranteed to all citizens in a democratic society.

We also wish to express our concern over the appalling conditions of solitary confinement under which Maria is being detained. Such detention violates the dignity and the rights of citizens.

1. We, therefore call upon the Malaysian Government to immediately take the following actions for safeguarding the rights of all who are engaged in demanding their right to participate in the political affairs of their country.

Release the detained Maria Chin Abdullah, the chairperson of BERSIH2.0, immediately.

2. Stop the harassment and oppression immediately on BERSIH's activists and their supporters.

3. Unconditionally guarantee the right to assemble and dissent and other basic rights and freedom that are enshrined in the constitution.

4. Take all steps necessary to ensure free and fair elections and good governance in Malaysia.

22 November 2016

The May18 Memorial Foundation, Gwangju, South Korea

The Laureates of the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights

Adilur Rahman Khan, Bangladesh

Bersih 2.0, Malaysia

Basil Fernando, Sri Lanka/Hong Kong.

Dandeniya Gamage Jayanthi, Sri Lanka.

Irom Sharmila Chanu, Manipur, India

Latifah Anum Siregar, Papua, Indonesia.

Ng Shui Meng (for Sombath Somphone) Laos

Sushil Pyakurel, Nepal.

Tempo Weekly Magazine, Indonesia.
