

**PM proposes bipartisan panel for polls reform**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**August 15, 2011**

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced today that the government will set up a parliamentary select committee to discuss electoral reforms before the next general election.

Recently there have been demands for free and fair elections. The government's response is that we will propose the setting up of a parliamentary select committee soon, which will be made up of members from both BN and opposition," he said.

Najib said this in a speech at a 'buka puasa' event at the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama) headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

"The committee will discuss all electoral reforms that needs to be implemented in order to achieve bipartisan agreement without any suspicion that there is manipulation by the government," he said.

Najib stressed that his administration will not form the government unless it is truly elected by the people.

"Don't think that we do not want a clean process of electing the government, we are committed to the tradition of parliamentary elections," he said.

Earlier, the premier pitched his father and former prime minister Abdul Razak Hussein's (right) legacy to highlight his commitment to parliamentary democracy.

"During May 13, my father was the chief of National Operations Council and he had absolute power. My father said to me that he was fearful of the power he had. I was in school then and could not understand him, but now in my position (as prime minister), I understand why absolute power is dangerous.

"It was fashionable in the 70s to continue with absolute power but my father returned power to the people through Parliament and elections," he said.

**DAP: Committee should be led by opposition**

The announcement comes following more than a month of pressure on the government and the Election Commission (EC) after tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets to demand electoral reform.

In an immediate reaction, DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang hailed the move as a vindication of electoral reform group Bersih 2.0 and the massive rally it organised on July 9.

"(To set up) a parliamentary select committee on electoral system (is the) first time Najib admits to gross electoral defects. Can Najib guarantee reforms in time for the 13th general election?" he said in a Twitter posting.

Lim added that the committee should be headed by an opposition MP with the full cooperation of the EC and relevant government departments.

However, the prime minister made no mention of the participation of civil societies in the committee as proposed by Bersih 2.0 chief Ambiga Sreenevasan.