

**Pakatan wants to helm electoral reform committee**  
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Pakatan Rakyat today demanded that it leads the parliamentary select committee on electoral reforms that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak yesterday promised to set up.

The head of the committee should be from the opposition, Pakatan said in a joint statement read out by Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar (left) at the coalition's press conference at PAS headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

The statement also listed other demands:

- The committee should have powers to investigate, validate and recommend sweeping changes. Sufficient authority and budget must be allocated;
- The investigation process should involve an independent audit on the current electoral process and systems by globally recognised firms (such as Price Waterhouse-Coopers and Ernst & Young);
- At the same time, the Election Commission must be held to account for all its seemingly partisan actions and statements that have led to the erosion of public confidence. Reforms must be enacted to the Election Commission itself in order to restore integrity to this institution that is supposed to safeguard democracy;
- Validation should include fair hearing of all issues and recommendations' especially the eight demands made by Bersih 2.0, and include political parties, civil societies and academia. Web 2.0 and Social Media to be used to allow for wider public feedback;
- A study to compare and adopt global best practices should be commissioned and tabled for consideration of the parliamentary committee; and
- As this matter needs wide-ranging coordination, analysis, reports, etc, a dedicated programme management unit sourced from a credible firm is to be at the disposal of the parliamentary select committee.

'No polls till reforms in place'

The Pakatan MPs also want Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to guarantee that the general election will not be called until after the parliamentary select committee on electoral reform has finished its work and the reforms it proposes are in place.

"These reforms must be finalised, announced and completed, in toto, before the 13th general election is called," Nurul Izzah said.

However, the PKR vice-president conveyed the opposition's scepticism over the move, which opposition MPs fear may be a whitewash and diversionary tactic of Najib.

"With the PM's flawed track record in fulfilling his promises, as in the stadium matter, we suspect that the select committee may be a diversion," Nurul Izzah said.

She said it would be useless for all concerned to go through the motions of the select committee, if Najib were to bushwhack them with snap polls prior to the completion of any real reform.

**'A smokescreen'**

Making similar comments, meanwhile, Selangor executive councilor Elizabeth Wong today warned that

the select committee could be a mere "smokescreen" unless he commits to calling for polls after the committee has concluded its work.

Speaking to reporters in Petaling Jaya, Wong (left) said that this could take "more than one year", and that calling an election before that would mean Najib is not serious about electoral reform.

"The committee would have to be formed in Parliament and sitting will resume on October 3.

"If a general election is called at the end of the year, then the select committee is a red herring, a smokescreen.

"If (Najib) is sincere about really cleaning up the roll and improving our electoral system, then he has to promise next GE won't be held until the parliamentary select committee finishes the job... and the reforms are in place," said the PKR elected state representative for Bukit Lanjan.

She added that the select committee on the Freedom of Information enactment on at the Selangor assembly level took about nine months to complete.

"And that is only at state level... the process was very intensive," she said.

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