

Citizenship for votes: Pakatan MPs want inquiry
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Unhappy with premier Najib Abdul Razak's plan to set up a select committee on electoral reform, Pakatan MPs are demanding a public inquiry into what they say is a core issue - alleged express-lane citizenship for permanent residents in exchange for votes.

"When he announced the select committee, he said it will only focus on electoral reforms. We Pakatan MPs want to stress that Najib cannot run away from the core issue of the issuance of citizenship to permanent residents," said PAS veep Salahuddin Ayub.

He was speaking on behalf of Pakatan MPs at a joint press conference held at the PAS headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today, following up on a letter of Aug 8 demanding an emergency sitting of Parliament to address the issue.

"We waited for his response after the seven-day deadline, which ended late yesterday. We can prove it (our claims) and we cannot overlook this matter. This is a matter with a far-reaching impact," he said.

Pakatan has claimed that the electoral roll is tainted, hinting at collusion between the Election Commission and the National Registration Department, and has said this presents a national security threat.

"Would we consent to foreigners - who don't understand our culture - determining the political direction of our country?" Salahuddin asked.

PKR veep Nurul Izzah Anwar cast doubt over the sudden registration of the newly-made citizens as voters.

"Why is it that immediately after becoming citizens, they register as voters en masse? Doesn't this raise some questions?" queried the Lembah Pantai MP.

'Sop to public opinion'

Salahuddin warned that the PM and Putrajaya should not dilly-dally, but observed that authorities have failed to act accordingly.

"Since the PM has failed to call for an emergency parliamentary sitting, he must call for a public hearing on the matter - a hearing that tours the country for the rakyat to give evidence on the issue of permanent residents being given citizenship."

Pakatan MPs will send another letter to Najib demanding a public inquiry into the matter, failing which they will ask for a royal commission of inquiry, he said.

He also dismissed the premier's sudden proposal for the select committee a knee-jerk reaction to the demand for an emergency sitting.

It appears that Najib is looking to pacify the MPs and the public by appearing to take action over irregularities in the electoral roll, he noted.

"He was compelled to answer before sundown yesterday, so he just made it up," he added.

Meanwhile, electoral reform group Bersih 2.0 said that if claims that the NRD is giving out identity cards to foreigners is true, it would be tantamount to treason.

"If the NRD has done such a thing, it would have been effectively committing treason. Because they are

selling off Malaysian citizenship rights like anything you can get from the pasar malam," said the group's steering committee member Wong Chin Huat.

Earlier today, Ampang MP Zuraida Kamaruddin claimed that she had evidence of illegal immigrants being legalised under the 6P programme who were asked to pledge loyalty and vote for Umno and BN.

Expressing concern over the recent development, the coalition said that it will look into the evidence provided by Zuraida.

The group also acknowledged the need for NRD to clean up its records, but stressed that the EC should not push the ball to NRD as their systems are linked.

"About the case of Mismah, that was not NRD's problem. On NRD's records - at least at that point of time - she would have been a permanent resident. So if the record is flawed, there is no reason the EC would have given her the right as a voter.

"If they want to blame NRD, then they have to explain how could a guy called Kg Baru (be registered as a voter)? If you claim everything is linked up then there is no reason for all these flaws," he added.

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