

## **Did Najib do a U-turn on select committee?**

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How did all the goodwill towards the planned parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform announced by Prime Minister Abdul Razak disappear in less than a week?

The point of contention has largely revolved around whether the prime minister can guarantee that the panel's reforms will be implemented before the next polls is called.

After chairing the Umno supreme council meeting last Friday, Najib (right) said that the next general election can be held anytime and is not bound by the work of the committee.

However, on Aug 15, when the prime minister announced the setting up of the PSC, Najib had said that the reforms are intended for the "coming general election".

Malaysiakini has reproduced an extract of the speech on that day:

"Parliamentary select committee ini akan membincangkan segala-gala electoral reform yang perlu kita lakukan supaya kita akan dapat kata sepakat untuk mengendalikan pilihanraya akan datang tanpa sebarang rasa syak wasangka bahawa ada sesuatu manipulasi yang dilakukan oleh kerajaan."

(This parliamentary select committee will discuss all electoral reforms that we need to do so that we can achieve consensus in carrying out the coming general election without any suspicion that there are manipulations done by the government)

The premier's apparent backpedalling has disappointed several quarters.

Electoral reform group Bersih 2.0, which had responded positively to the initial announcement, expressed regret, pointing out that the PSC will be pointless if Najib dissolves parliament to call a general election.

The opposition were less kind, with DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang, who had initially chipped in on the proposed PSC, now calling it a "show".

PAS, too, has raised the possibility that it will not participate in the PSC, labelling the prime minister's statement as "arrogant".

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