

PM does a flip-flop to stay in power
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MP SPEAKS Manipulation is a common tactic among dictators. In Malaysia, the guy who caricatures this is none other than Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

In a throwback to the 1980s Malaysia, which was ruled by Dr Mahathir Mohamad who pulled every string available to stay in power, Najib is conniving with his cohort of bully-boys to keep his position intact.

Unfortunately, this is the most sincere compliment I could pay the premier.

Before we could digest Najib's (left) announcement of setting-up a parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reforms, he did the flapjack stunt and said the general election could be held anytime and is not bound by the outcome of the PSC.

His statement gives us a clear indication that Najib is not serious about revamping the country's electoral system. And why would he?

Vote-rigging, phantom voting, postal voting and the irregularities of the system are what Najib is banking on to keep his top job in the country.

Abuses in the electoral system are nothing new in Malaysia. It has been practiced, over the years, by Umno and Barisan Nasional leaders to cling to power without any legitimacy.

Through Najib's statement we could arrive at a prognosis that the next general election would be the dirtiest in Malaysia's political history. Or we could drum up reasons for his flip-flop statements, which have been one too many the last couple of months, to say that there is a deep divide within Umno and the premier is facing immense pressure to toe the line from his own peers.

Not too long ago, the world witnessed the Arab spring revolution. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to demand their rights from leaders who were deemed indispensable. I am speaking of none other than Hosni Mubarak, Muammar Gaddafi and Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.

Strong yearning not to live in submission

The protesters were motivated by a strong yearning not to live in submission. They were determined to stop any leader from trampling on their dignity and human rights.

These rebellions would not stop until leaders who rule through dictatorship, suppression and corruption are thrown out of power.

We, too, witnessed our share of history on July 9 this year, when tens of thousands of Malaysians took to the streets to demand that their voting pattern tallied with the election results.

They braved tear gas, water cannon and baton-wielding anti-riot cops to demand the government does not tread on their right to vote in a system which is free from gross violations and abuses.

In response, we have seen the nonchalant dismissal by Najib and his cabinet ministers when issues of permanent residence (PR) holders being registered as potential voters came to light. That bunch is also non-committal about the admission of army officers who said they voted for hundreds of people.

Through his latest stunt, Najib has shattered every illusion that the electoral system in the country is free and fair. It is his admission by default.

Now we, the rakyat, must rise and demand that the Umno-led BN government does not trample on our

right to vote in a less hostile and corrupt electoral system.

For when the people rise, Najib and his government would fall.

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