

Pakatan gives Najib one last chance
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Pakatan Rakyat today gave the prime minister and the Election Commission one last chance to prove their commitment to electoral reform before the coalition decides whether or not to boycott the parliamentary select committee on the matter.

Speaking to reporters today, Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said the final decision would be made by October.

"We have not made a decision to boycott, but are making it clear that it is the onus of the government to show good faith, with the Election Commission taking immediate measures, and the PM categorically showing that he means business by guaranteeing that elections will only be held after the EC has taken the necessary measures.

"We have a few weeks, after Ramadan, with the goodwill of Aidilfitri... one or two weeks to consider. By next month, we will decide once and for all " Anwar said.

Shahrir Samad to chair panel?

Meanwhile, China Press, quoting sources, said on its online portal this evening that the cabinet decided today to appoint Johor Baru MP and former minister Shahrir Samad (below) to chair the select committee.

The daily said Najib himself suggested Shahrir's name at the meeting, saying he felt Shahrir had the experience as a minister, and as a backbencher now, he could perform the job fairly.

Speaking alongside Anwar after the Pakatan leadership council meeting, PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu said the most crucial thing the EC could do to show its commitment was to clean up the electoral roll.

This, Mohamad said, did not require the formation of a parliamentary select committee, which the government said would be established during the October sitting of Parliament.

Other measures the EC could take without the formation of a select committee, he added, were the use of indelible ink to mark those who have voted and a longer campaign period.

'Formula for delaying tactics'

Adding to this, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said without immediate action from the EC, the parliamentary select committee would appear to be a "formula for delaying tactics".

"We want to be convinced that this is not a political ploy," Lim said, noting as well that the previous parliamentary select committee on electoral integrity ended up a "flop".

Besides guaranteeing that he would not call election before the committee's recommendations were in place, Lim added, Najib could also show commitment by accepting the concept of a caretaker government.

"This means that there will be no public funds used (during election campaign periods) and no giving money or promising allocations."

Anwar said Pakatan was also calling for a Royal Commission of Inquiry into claims that permanent residents have been granted citizenship without due process.

This was after the prime minister remained silent despite Pakatan's call for an emergency sitting of

Parliament to debate the matter.

"To solve this rising anxiety, we suggest that a Royal Commission of Inquiry be formed at the soonest to investigate the matter," Anwar added.

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