Pakatan: Don't use PSC to delay poll reforms
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The opposition coalition has reiterated that, while it supports the government's proposal to form the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reforms, this should not be an excuse for the Election Commission (EC) not to implement reforms on its own.

NONE“We don't want the PSC to be an excuse for the (EC) to delay, wait and not implement any reforms,” said PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim at a joint press conference with PAS and DAP in the Parliament lobby today.

He also announced the three representatives of Pakatan who will take part in the PSC.

“From PKR it will be Azmin Ali, from PAS election director Hatta Ramli and from DAP it will be the party's deputy election director Anthony Loke,” he said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Aziz earlier today moved for the setup of the PSC. It was passed unanimously in the Dewan Rakyat.

Representing BN in the committee chaired by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Dr Maximus Ongkili, are Alexander Nanta Linggi, Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad, Dr Fong Chan Onn and Hulu Selangor MP P Kamalanathan.

Representing the opposition, meanwhile, are Azmin Ali, Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli and Anthony Loke.

The sole Independent MP on the committee is Wangsa Maju legislator Wee Choo Keong.

‘Simplify registration process’

During debate on the matter in the House, Anwar - as Opposition Leader - also pointed out that the core function of the EC is to maintain the electoral roll.

azlan“Don’t use the excuse of the formation of PSC to prolong issues that can be resolved quickly and within the EC’s jurisdiction,” he said.

“There have been claims that Bangladeshis have been given citizenship for votes... and there several problems in the electoral roll in my constituency, Permatang Pauh, where 70 people are registered in a small house.”

He recommended that the process of registering voters be simplified to encourage more to come forward.

“Every time we sit in consultation with the EC, they tell us they don’t have the power or they have to wait for instructions. This has to stop,” Anwar added.

'A change of heart'?

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, meanwhile, welcomed the set up of the PSC, but expressed reservations given the numerous calls for election reform in the past that have been ignored.

parliament pandikar amin anwar ibrahim lim kit siang dap pkr pc 121108 04“Is there now a genuine

change of heart by the prime minister, Umno and BN representatives by the formation of the PSC for electoral reforms before Parliament today?

“Although Najib is now wearing the mantle of political and democratic reform, Malaysians are entitled to question the bona fide of the prime minister’s sudden conversion to the cause of electoral reforms,” he said.

Lim cited 'government high-handedness' in tackling the Bersih 2.0 rally on July 9 and strength of arms used to disperse the tens of thousands who had gathered on the streets of Kuala Lumpur that day.

Prior to the rally, the government had declared the Bersih coalition illegal, banned all related paraphernalia and secured a court injunction preventing 91 personalities from key areas in Kuala Lumpur, among others.

NONE“The DAP, Pakatan Rakyat, the civil society and Malaysians as a whole have therefore more than legitimate grounds to doubt the government’s sincerity and real purpose with this PSC proposal – whether there is a genuine change of heart or political ploy,” said Lim.

Lim demanded that an assurance be given that Parliament will not be dissolved until the recommendation by the PSC are tabled and among others urged for the inclusion of Bersih’s demands to be taken as an integral part of the PSC.

'Pakatan MBs have same power'

Later, rounding up the policy debate session of the Bill to form the PSC, Nazri hit out at opposition demands.

NONEThis was in relation to the government’s intention to wait until the PSC completes its recommendations before calling for polls.

"Like the PM, (the Pakatan) MBs have the power to set the election date (for the state legislature)," he told the House.

"We on the BN side cannot question their right. We respect it as this is accepted practice."

He reiterated that setting the general election date is the preragotive of the Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The Bill to set up the PSC was passed after spirited debate from both sides of the floor.

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