

EC to be poll reform PSC's first witness
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The parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform is to call the Election Commission (EC) as its first witness tomorrow.

Pakatan Rakyat MPs Azmin Ali (PKR-Gombak), Dr Hatta Ramli (PAS-Kuala Krai) and Anthony Loke (DAP-Rasah) said the EC will be asked to explain all claims pertaining to shortcomings in the electoral roll.

Azmin reiterated that demands such as the use of indelible ink, the clean-up of the electoral roll and a 21-day campaign period do not require amendments to election laws, and only need the EC's nod.

"We do not want the PSC to be a toothless panel. There is no need to wait for the PSC to complete its work for six months in order to implement these reforms," he said.

"If the EC is sincere and serious about reforming the election process, it will do the necessary."

Azmin, Hatta and Loke said they would put forward several demands at their second meeting today.

The Pakatan members urged the PSC to state that it would be impartial and to obtain a guarantee that Parliament will not be dissolved - or an election called - until it has come up with recommendations.

Azmin also said that they would appeal to the PSC to allow enough space for the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0) to explain their eight demands.

"We do not want this committee to be used as a trick to delay election reform," he told a press conference.

Loke said the EC should be represented by its chairperson or its deputy and not just by any representative.

"We do not want it to send low-ranking officers. Their officers will not be able to answer the claims. This is a serious matter and I hope the EC does not tell us later that it was not aware of the hearing," he said.

More discrepancies?

Citing fresh discrepancies in the electoral roll, Loke showed reporters two items on dubious voters in Negri Sembilan, who were found to have been registered as both postal and regular voters.

Loke said they had detected this after the EC had displayed the details of 42,051 voters whose records were unverifiable last week.

"We have presented the EC with much proof, strong evidence, so there is no reason why it should wait for six months to rectify these discrepancies," Loke added.

Hatta urged the EC to be more "proactive" in rectifying the errors, rather than wait to "react" to every complaint.

The PSC, mooted last month, comprises five BN parliamentarians, three from Pakatan and an Independent.

It is headed by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Maximus Johnity Ongkili,

The other four BN representatives are Kapit MP Alexander Nanta Linggi (PBB), Kangar MP Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad (Umno), Alor Gajah MP Fong Chan Onn (MCA), and Hulu Selangor MP P Kamalanathan (MIC).

Wangsa Maju MP Wee Choo Keong (Independent) is the ninth member of the committee.

The panel, purported to reflect Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's reform initiatives, will have six months to come up with its recommendations.

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