

BN minority group: Let PSC finish work before polls

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Angkatan Amanah Merdeka or Amanah, the newly-registered NGO led by Umno MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and several former BN key leaders, today backed the demand that the government calls the next general election only after recommendations by the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform are implemented.

The stand was announced at a press conference by Razaleigh, who conceded that they have been sidelined in their respective parties, hence the need to continue to voice their opinions on the platform of Amanah.

He welcomed the government's decision to form the PSC and hoped the law amendments recommended by it would be implemented before the next general election.

Also present at the press conference was former tourism minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, who is one of the six deputy presidents of Amanah.

"We think the election should be held after the committee completes its works and its recommendations are implemented.

"Otherwise, there is no meaning in setting up this committee," commented the former Umno MP.

"If they hold the election before PSC has done its work, it will seem like main-main (not serious) and drama, which is not so nice," Kadir said, adding that this was the stance Amanah's central council reached at its meeting recently.

The call to hold the election after implementing electoral reform was first raised by the opposition and supported by electoral reform coalition Bersih 2.0 and several BN politicians. However Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has yet to make a clear stand on this demand.

Razaleigh, the Kelantan prince popularly known as Ku Li, pointed out that the July 9 street protest called by Bersih 2.0 which resulted in the arrest of 1,697 people could have been avoided if the government had accepted the proposal to set up the PSC.

Abdul Kadir also cautioned the government to be mindful in carrying out any exercise to register illegal migrants in the run-up to the election as it could be seen as a tactic to turn them into voters to shore up BN's support.

The press conference held at Razaleigh's house in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon was to announce that Amanah has been approved by the Registrar of Societies as a legal NGO two weeks ago.

Reviving the 'sense of togetherness'

The organisation, launched in July, aims to revive the "sense of togetherness and true family spirit that prevailed among all Malaysians during the time of our common struggles for national independence".

Other notable council members include former MIC deputy president S Subramanian, Sabah BN component party United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Dusun Murut Organisation (Upko) deputy president Wilfred M Bumburing, Sarawak opposition veteran politician Daniel Tajem, former Bar Council president K Rangunath and former Suhakam commissioner Simon Sipaun.

Both Tengku Razaleigh and Abdul Kadir said that they chose to use Amanah as a new platform to serve

the people after Umno no longer accommodates dissidents in the party.

Aside from electoral reform, Amanah also has its eyes on the issues of corruption and bureaucracy which could slow down the nation's economic growth, said Abdul Kadir.

“We might even see the prime minister to voice out our opinions.”

Asked on the political transformation programme launched by Najib, Razaleigh expressed his reservations, commenting that it is very hard to gauge its effectiveness as it is not a “complete transformation”.

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