

**Indelible ink: Pakatan backs constitutional change**  
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**by S Pathmawathy**

Pakatan Rakyat will throw its weight behind a constitutional amendment to implement indelible ink for voters in elections, if that is what the government insists on.

"The attorney-general (AG) has said that a provision of the constitution must be amended if indelible ink is to be used.

"So, we decided today that we want the AG to immediately draft the amendment, on condition it is tabled in this Dewan Rakyat sitting," Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said after chairing a Pakatan presidential council meeting at Parliament House today.

AG Abdul Gani Patail had said that Article 119 of the federal constitution had to be amended if the use of indelible ink was to be implemented.

"Although these are tricks by the attorney-general to delay the process... the council wants to make it clear that we are willing to support the change, on condition, that it's done immediately," the PKR de facto leader said.

'We'll support if AG insists on amendment'

"If it needs the two-thirds majority vote, we are together with the BN and we will support it."

DAP's parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang said although Pakatan strongly feels that no constitutional amendment was required, the coalition would support the move if the AG insisted on it.

Election reform activists have repeatedly called for the implementation of the indelible ink to curb voting fraud and have stressed that the procedure could be implemented without any constitutional amendment if the use of the ink is included in the election regulations.

A key proponent of the overhaul to the elections system, Bersih 2.0 chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan (right), maintains that the implementation of indelible ink can be made under Section 16 of the Elections Act, which allows the Election Commission (EC) to make regulations.

However, the legal arm of the government, the AG's Chambers, is adamant that constitutional amendment is necessary, since the EC scrapped the indelible ink plan for the March 8, 2008, general election following, legal advice.

Any amendment to the federal constitution requires the backing of two-thirds of the MPs or 148 members out of the 222-member Parliament. The BN only has 137 MPs while the opposition makes up 76, besides nine Independents.