

Clean up the roll or quit, Ambiga tells EC
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The Election Commission (EC) have been told again to act on the discrepancies in the electoral roll highlighted by the NGOs coalition Bersih or just as well resign.

kuantan 109 green luncheon 091011 ambiga sBersih 2.0 co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan (right) said under Article 114 (2) of the federal constitution, EC officials are appointed by the Agong and their foremost duty is to secure the confidence of the public.

The underlying word, Ambiga pointed out, is for the EC to enjoy public confidence.

However, the current seven-member EC panel does not possess this, she added.

Ambiga clarified that there have been numerous public complaints about the discrepancies and inexplicable entries in the electoral roll for the past several months.

"The EC refuses to implement a proactive system to clean up the roll. Bersih 2.0 has since last year suggested an independent committee be set up to do this.

"Had our suggestions been accepted, the electoral roll would have been cleaned up substantially by now.

"The EC's stand seems to be that if anyone finds out about the discrepancies, then they will act, but not otherwise.

"This, together with their stand that they are powerless to improve the whole system, has caused the public to question their independence," she said in a statement to Malaysiakini.

Peaceful protest in Dataran Merdeka

Ambiga was responding to EC deputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar's call for Bersih to respect the federal constitution over their appointment by the Agong.

The NGO coalition has called for a sit-down rally on Apr 28, dubbed Bersih 3.0, in protest of the EC and the PSC audit on the electoral roll.

It claims the EC's job has been incomplete, and it has not addressed issues relating to postal voting, election offences and measures to end dirty politics.

Ambiga said Bersih could not agree more that the constitution must be respected by all, but pointed out that the EC should do more as the constitution stipulates that it must enjoy public confidence.

The former Malaysian Bar chairperson said the situation was further aggravated by the lack of initiatives or the failure to act in relation to the other demands of Bersih 2.0.

"In fact they (the EC) often behave like a government agency. Further, just because they are appointed under the federal constitution does not mean they are above the law and are not accountable," she said.

EC members must ask themselves

The Bersih co-chairperson said: "If they have failed the rakyat, they should do the decent thing and resign in accordance with the best of democratic processes.

"It is the view of Bersih 2.0 that the EC has indeed failed the rakyat and that they no longer enjoy public confidence as stated under the federal constitution.

"As such, the call by Bersih 2.0 accords entirely with the solemn words and spirit of the federal constitution.

"The question therefore is whether the members of the EC will act in accordance with the constitution.

"Each of the EC member must ask whether the agency as a whole has indeed served the rakyat above all else and whether their actions have engendered public confidence in the commission.

"There are no two ways about what they are duty bound to do if, as we believe, they have lost the confidence of the people," added Ambiga.

NONEMalaysiakini had in the past pointed out several discrepancies in the electoral rolls, including a female voter by the name of Kg Baru, only for it to be removed after it was highlighted.

The news portal had also highlighted what is described as the Mismahgate scandal, where a permanent resident became a citizen within four hours and then became a voter.

Yesterday, it was reported a voter named Ho Heng Tong, 53, had found himself classified as dead although he is very much alive.

This and other discrepancies were highlighted by Bersih, following which the only action taken was in the case of Kg Baru.

As such, Bersih is staking the claim that the EC only reacts after the so-called "mistakes" are pointed out, and not being pro-active in cleaning up the electoral roll itself.

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