

## **Mission raises concerns over upcoming polls**

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**By Aidila Razak**

A seven-person international fact-finding mission today raised three concerns over Malaysia's electoral system with Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Abdul Aziz.

According to Australian senator Nicholas Xenophon, a member of the mission, one concern brought up at the one-hour meeting at Parliament house was the short campaigning period of 10 days.

"In Australia it is at least 33 days and in India and Pakistan it is 90 days, which almost feels too long," he told reporters after the meeting with Nazri.

Xenophon, who is here with the other delegates upon invitation by Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim's office, said that another concern was the proportions of constituencies.

"We are also concerned about the fundamental issue of one vote one value where some seats have 7,000 to 8,000 constituents while others have close to 100,000. It does not reflect the democratic will of a nation," he said.

The mission also raised concern that there is access to media is imbalanced between the opposition and government parties.

He, however, could not disclose what Nazri's response to their concerns, except that the minister had assures the mission of a "clean and fair election".

Nazri told the 'truth'

Asked if the mission are acting on opposition complaints, Xenophon said that the information was collected from public domain and that the mission comes with goodwill to hear all sides of the story.

"I cannot stress enough that we come as friends of Malaysia... Friends tell each other the truth," he said.

He added that while the invitation came from the opposition, everyone on the team are "fiercely independent" and have an interest in Malaysia's development.

The delegation will also meet with BN secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor today. Meetings with election reform pressure group Bersih 2.0 and the Election Commission are slated for the next two days.

They will conclude the mission on Sunday and present interim findings, with a report expected to be made public within the next two weeks.

Others in the team are Pakistani senator Hasil Khan Bizenjo, Filipino University of East College of Law dean Amado Valdez, Germany's Freidrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom coordinator Juliane Schmucker, University of New South Wales associate professor of politics Clinton Fernandes, Indian journalist Mobashar Jawed Akhbar and the Indonesian International Scholars Association chairperson Mohamad Nasir Tamara Tamimi.



