

Will the gov't implement clean elections?

MalaysiaKini.com

May 19, 2012

By Concerned Scholars

The 13th Malaysian general election will be held sometime between now and April 2013.

These elections have the potential to be the most free and fair elections held in the country for several decades.

For the coming elections to live up to this potential, we call on the government and other major players and stakeholders to scrupulously observe the following priority concerns which we see as key to ensuring an outcome that can have greater legitimacy among Malaysians and outside observers:

1. Implementation of recommendations of the parliamentary select committee to clean up the electoral process
2. Free and fair access to mass media for all parties
3. Public service staff at local, state and federal levels to observe strict neutrality
4. Prohibition on misuse of government and associated public facilities and apparatus for electioneering purposes
5. All parties to be transparent and accountable in the use of money during the elections. Both coalitions need to disclose their sources of funding and provide a detailed account of their campaign expenditure

To enable a more level playing field for the coming elections, it is necessary that these concerns be addressed immediately and not just before the elections.

We are especially concerned that urgent measures be undertaken to ensure that the civil service and media strictly observe strict neutrality in the run-up to the coming elections. Necessary measures could be proposed by civil society organizations engaged in monitoring the elections.

Further, to forestall any attempt at disruption of the election outcome, we propose that all political leaders and political parties agree to a short statement promising that they will respect the will of the people exercised at the polling booth as well as honour a peaceful transition of power.

This declaration – to be jointly crafted by the ruling and opposition parties - should be widely disseminated as a public service to discourage any individuals or groups that may be intent on creating mischief aimed at overturning the outcome of the elections.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/198409>