

**M'sians overseas can vote by post, says EC**  
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**By Lee Way Loon**

The Election Commission (EC) today announced that Malaysian citizens living overseas can vote by post come the next general election.

At a media briefing this morning, EC chief Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said the commission is in the midst of preparing the legislative changes to allow overseas Malaysians to vote.

"The only condition is (that citizens) must come back to Malaysia at least once in five years before Parliament is dissolved," he said.

"This is to make sure that they know our political situation well before voting."

He justified the condition by citing the examples of foreign countries like Singapore and Australia, which also required overseas voters to come back to their homeland within a certain period.

He also reminded Malaysians residing overseas to register as an overseas citizen with the Malaysian embassies before registering as a postal voter with the EC.

Aziz said the EC would table the amendments at the next Parliament sitting in September, if this was required.

"The system can be implemented by September if we have to amend the law, but it can be done earlier than that (if legal amendments are not needed)."

'A deadline is a deadline, but...'

Though the election date is not known yet, Aziz said he is confident that the system can be ready before the national polls.

Asked why the EC cannot meet the three-month deadline set by the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform, he said it was because the EC has too many things to implement.

"A deadline is a deadline, it doesn't mean we have to finish all," he said.

In April, the PSC had recommended that the EC introduce a system whereby all Malaysian citizens living overseas could vote by post.

The EC was given a deadline of three months to consult with the relevant government agencies in order to enable the necessary regulations.

In the media briefing today, the EC also introduced a new position arrangement in the polling stream, where the polling agents will switch position with the polling booth (petak undi).

Under the new arrangement, the polling agents will sit facing the entrance to make it easier to monitor the voting process.

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