

'Four months and still no polls reform!'

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By Lee Long Hui

DAP's Rasah MP Anthony Loke has slammed the Election Commission (EC) for not implementing the recommendations of the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform according to the time frame given.

He is unhappy that the EC was merely practising a "public relations exercise" over the past four months by coming out with many excuses for not implementing the recommendations.

Speaking at a press conference today, Loke, who was in the nine-member PSC, said among the recommendations the EC had yet to fulfil are the mechanism to allow Malaysians who live overseas to vote.

The other important recommendations are guidelines for a caretaker government once Parliament is dissolved and the cleaning up of the electoral roll as per the defects revealed by the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems (Mimos).

He said the EC was given a time frame of 45 days to three months, after the report was tabled in the Parliament on April 2, to implement the recommendations. However, nothing had been done till today.

"It has been more than four months since the PSC report on electoral reform was tabled in Parliament, but the EC has yet to demonstrate its commitment to implement the recommendations made," Loke added.

EC comes out with many excuses

Loke, who is DAP Socialist Youth chief, said EC chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof and his deputy Wan Ahmad Wan Omar have always come out with excuses to justify the delay in implementing the reforms agreed to.

"We have heard many excuses from the EC chairperson and his deputy, more from the deputy chairperson, saying that EC is overwhelmed by work, that they are very busy, that they have to conduct the coming election, hold training sessions and implement so many changes and so on, and that they are also understaffed.

"But I believe Malaysians are generally tired of these excuses from the EC," Loke added.

Although the EC has given its green light for overseas Malaysians to vote as postal voters, Loke pointed out, it has still not come out with the detail procedure for this.

The DAP was still receiving many complaints from Malaysians overseas that they were facing difficulty in registering as new voters at embassies and high commissions.

The EC, Loke said, should also start calling all the stakeholders for consultations in order to come out the guidelines for a caretaker government.

"The process should start right now, and there should be consultation with all the stakeholders, not only political parties but also NGOs such as Bersih and the Bar Council.

"The various related NGOs should be consulted, but it is clear that the EC is more interested in conducting public relations exercises," he added.

'Registered as voters without their knowledge'

Meanwhile, DAP's Subang Jaya assemblyperson Hannah Yeoh, who was also present, revealed that there was a huge increase of around 15,000 voters in her constituency over the last four years.

During her recent house-to-house visit at SS18 in Subang Jaya, Yeoh said, two residents complained that they have been registered as new voters, without their knowledge.

She said she also received an email from a student studying abroad, who also complained that she had been registered as a voter without her or her parents' knowledge.

Yeoh therefore urged all Malaysians overseas who would not be back in the country during the coming general election to inform their respective MPs and state assemblypersons, so that they would be aware of this during the voting day.

Loke also announced that DAP would launch another round of a nationwide voters registration exercise over the next three weeks.

He said more than 40 locations would be set up, at major shopping malls, morning and night markets and the party service centres, throughout the period to enable citizens to register as voters.

"Given the increasing likelihood that the 13th general election will only be called next year, eligible Malaysians are strongly urged to register before the cut-off date of Sept 15 to ensure that they have a chance of voting in the event the election is called in January 2013," Loke added.