

BN using 'old school' approach to human rights
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Human rights watchdog Proham has said the BN's approach to human rights is still based on the "old school of thought", as evident by the references to human rights the coalition made in its recently unveiled manifesto.

Proham said although it showcased a greater commitment by BN for social, cultural and economic rights of all communities over the next five years, it still centered on enhancing security and public safety.

"This approach to human rights is based on an old school of thought based on national security, public order and public safety.

"This old approach does not fully appreciate that human rights are inalienable human rights and not what the state or government decides to bestow on its citizens," said watchdog chairperson Simon Sipaun (left) and its secretary-general Denison Jayasooria in a joint statement today.

They were referring to BN's plans to continue and enlarge the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), as well as references made in the manifesto to the abolishment of Internal Security Act (ISA), Restricted Residence Act and Emergency Proclamations and enactment of the Peaceful Assembly Act (PAA).

'BN must lay down clear road map'

The group thus called on BN to incorporate several of Proham's suggestions, among which:

To establish a National Human Rights Action Plan after discussion with civil society groups, government agencies and Parliament.

To strengthen the role of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) by ensuring that its annual report is debated in Parliament.

To establish a permanent parliamentary select committee on human rights to review recommendations by the various government agencies and ministries.

To establish a special customary land tribunal to review all the land rights cases involving the indigenous communities.

To establish an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) to investigate death in custody, death by shooting and other complaints on the police force, as recommended by the Royal Police Commission in 2005.

To review all the current legislation and remove 'the ouster clauses' which restricts judicial review, especially Section 9A of the Elections Act, and those that impact fundamental liberties.

To ratify all the core human rights conventions.

Finally BN, according to Proham, must lay down a "clear road map", during its upcoming general election campaign, on how it plans to safeguard human rights should it be re-elected to form the federal government.

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