

## **US congratulates Najib, frowns on polls irregularities**

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While congratulating Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak on the BN victory, the White House has also expressed concern over reported irregularities in the conduct of Malaysia's 13th general elections on Sunday.

Its acting Deputy Spokesperson Patrick Ventrell said the White House is aware of the concerns over the irregularities and notes that the opposition parties faced significant restrictions on access to the media.

Ventrell, the White House spokesperson said in a statement that Washington was pleased to see Malaysians across the political spectrum engaged in the electoral process in large numbers with unprecedented enthusiasm, as a vibrant opposition is a foundation of democracy.

"We note concerns regarding reported irregularities in the conduct of the election, and believe it is important that Malaysian authorities address the concerns that have been raised. We look forward to the outcome of their investigations," he added.

He pointed out that addressing these issues is important to strengthen confidence in the electoral process. "And so we call on all parties to peacefully respect the will of the voters."

Continued cooperation assured

Ventrell also said the White House congratulates the BN and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak on their victory.

The United States looks forward to continuing its close cooperation with the government and the people of Malaysia to continue to strengthen democracy, peace, and prosperity in the region, he said.

Sunday's elections saw Najib's BN being returned with a reduced 133 seats majority against the Anwar Ibrahim led opposition's 89.

Despite Pakatan registering almost 51 per cent of the popular vote nationwide, the opposition made little headway in terms of the number of seats with Najib's mostly in rural areas and parts of Sabah and Sarawak.

In the 2008 polls BN retained 51 per cent of the popular vote, winning 140 out of the 222 parliamentary seats.

There were also allegations of irregularities like non-citizens being given identity card to vote, and the suspicious practice of not allowing access to monitor early voting ballot boxes and also the indelible ink which could be washed off easily within hours.

Najib had blamed the heavy loss of seats , the worst suffered by BN in its 57 years' history to a Chinese tsunami, however, last night's show of support for the Pakatan with a multi-racial crowd of 120,000 in black protesting the polls' results and irregularities, on a working day may prove otherwise.

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