

BN is effectively a minority government

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COMMENT In assessing the results of the long-awaited 13th general elections, it is imperative that one considers the actual conditions under which the elections were conducted.

Uninformed observers, particularly from overseas, assume that because Malaysia has a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy, our elections are conducted freely, fairly and in the spirit of fair play.

The reality is that our elections are never held as they are in mature democracies like the United Kingdom, India or Australia.

They are rather akin to another Commonwealth country, Zimbabwe, where Robert Mugabe has been in power for some 33 years, and where the ruling party always wins because it thinks it has a divine right to rule, and will cheat to remain in power. Institutions intended to be independent and impartial have never acted independently and impartially.

NONEFirst, the Election Commission (EC). It does not even give the semblance of being an independent umpire in a contest between two coalitions.

Instead, the EC has been most partisan, always favouring the ruling BN. Bridget Welsh, a well-respected and independent scholar, highlighted in Malaysiakini, the impact of the increased numbers in the electoral roll which were out of line with historical patterns of voter registration.

As examples, she referred to the 21 percent increase in Bachok and 29 percent in Bukit Gantang. Apart from irregularities concerning early and postal voting of some 240,000 voters, double voting and phantom voting have also allegedly taken place. Many others have already written about these flaws in the voting process.

Secondly, in appearing to uphold law and order, the police force had been equally partisan, and reportedly going to the extent of transporting and protecting newly-arrived ballot boxes which contained sufficient votes to tip the balance in favour of BN in closely contested seats.

When Malaysian voters attempted to ensure that nothing untoward like that would happen, the police brought in FRU trucks with heavily-armed police ready to

intimidate civilians attempting to prevent abuse.

Thirdly, the mainstream media's sole function has been to print lies and distortions while not giving any mention to any good point that Pakatan may have made.

Fourthly, the caretaker government gave out money and other gifts which, by any yardstick, would constitute bribes and electoral offences. Yet, nothing was done to stop them.

Finally, and perhaps the worst offence committed by BN, with total complicity by EC, was allowing foreigners to vote.

In every nation, only citizens enjoy the privilege of voting in national elections. It is part of nationhood and citizenship. Article 119 (1) of the federal constitution confines the right to vote to citizens, and they further have to comply with residential and registration requirements. Yet, foreigners were allowed to vote in the thousands.

A stolen election

The scandal involving plane loads arriving in Malaysia days before polling has not been credibly answered. One wonders whether any other ruling party in the world will go to the extent of what BN has done. Mugabe may have to copy BN in this trick. All those who participated in this unconstitutional and wholly unacceptable conduct are guilty of treachery and treason.

Most Malaysians knew that this election would be stolen. That is exactly what happened on Sunday, May 5 between 5pm when the polls closed and when the results were announced.

azlanThe BN game-plan was to focus on about 30 parliamentary states. Winning them at all costs would ensure a return of power. Thus, they were not interested in Karpal Singh's seat in Bukit Gelugor which he won by 42,000 votes or Seputeh where Teresa Kok increased her formidable majority to 61,000 seats.

Rather, the focus was on closely contested seats. In these seats, recounts were ordered, which invariably resulted in BN victories. The results were announced very late. There was always a break in the chain of evidence, that is, between the sealing of the ballot boxes after counting in the voting centres, and the subsequent recounts and final announcement of results seven or eight hours later.

With the benefit of hindsight, it becomes clear why in the last week before the

elections when all the evidence suggested a surge for Pakatan, the Umno "war room" was confident of winning 140 to 150 seats: they had "insider information" about cheating. The evidence is slowly being uncovered and no doubt by the time these results are challenged in court in the coming weeks, the picture would be much clearer.

An analogy would be a 100-metre race where the BN runner is wearing the best track suit while the legs of his Pakatan rival tied together. The starter, the official at the tape, the track announcer and the final appeal tribunal are all BN-friendly. What would be the outcome of that race?

It is against these absolutely lop-sided voting conditions that one must at once congratulate the people of Malaysia for voting in such large numbers to ensure a magnificent performance by Pakatan against all odds.

Massive gerrymandering

Even when the results were officially announced by EC, there was discrepancy. The first announcements in the evening of May 5 placed the total national voter turnout at around the 80% mark. The EC subsequently announced on May 6 that it was at 84.84%, a significant increase.

Does the 4% increase represent phantom voters? Set out below is a table that has been compiled from election data published on the EC website.

FULL WIDTH

On the assumption that the information provided by EC is reliable and trustworthy, the critical facts that emerge on our parliamentary elections are as follows:

1. Of the record-breaking voter turnout of 84.84% resulting in 11,257,147 votes being cast nationwide, Pakatan secured 50.85% while BN received 46.87%.

Pakatan received 361,101 more votes than BN in the entire country.

2. Pakatan's margin of victory is more impressive if one considers the result in peninsular Malaysia. Pakatan received 53.26% of the popular vote, while BN had 45.55%. Pakatan received 688,288 more votes than BN. Yet it won five seats less than BN for Parliament.

NONE3. Pakatan's best performances were in Penang (67.77%), Kuala Lumpur (64.65%) and Selangor (59.36%). BN did best in Sarawak (58.26%), Perlis (55.39%) and Pahang (55.18%). The two seats in Putrajaya and Labuan have been

disregarded for this purpose.

4. Kelantan and Terengganu are states in the Malay hinterland. Malay voters constitute at least 90% of the electorate in each state. BN secured 51.42% in Terengganu and 46.24% in Kelantan. 48.47% of the voters in Terengganu supported Pakatan, while 53.7% of Kelantan voted for Pakatan.

This is the best proof that BN was telling another of its big lies when it described Sunday's result as a "Chinese tsunami". The plain and obvious fact is Pakatan could not have received a total of 5.62 million votes nationwide if only the Chinese had supported them. Instead, substantial numbers of Malays, Indians, Kadazans and Dayaks voted for Pakatan.

5. Perak has an interesting story of its own. For the parliamentary seats, Pakatan received 54.48% of the votes while BN received 44.71%. Thus, Pakatan received 111,893 more votes than BN.

For the state elections, Pakatan also received 54.48% of the votes, while BN received 44.4%. The votes cast were 625,710 for Pakatan and 506,947 for BN. Hence, Pakatan had a wide margin of 118,763 state votes over BN.

Yet BN formed the state government winning 31 seats to Pakatan's 28 seats. Only a combination of gerrymandering and outright cheating caused this massive imbalance.

On these facts, an objective case can be made that the BN federal government does not enjoy political legitimacy. It did not secure the mandate of the majority. It is a minority government insofar as public support is concerned.

It is only because of massive gerrymandering that BN has majority representation in the Dewan Rakyat, enabling it to form the federal government. If 25 to 30 of the results are declared void, and by-elections follow in a free and fair manner, the BN government may fall.

When the institutions which were intended to give sanctity to the voters in their once in a five-year opportunity to decide on their government failed disastrously, public confidence was shattered, both in the newly elected government, and in the institutions which allowed this to happen. This is Malaysia's tragedy, and an awakening.

Two final comments

One needs more time to reflect upon Sunday's events and their aftermath. Two comments can nonetheless be immediately be made.

In the second decade of the 21st century, it is difficult to believe that there are politicians in any part of the globe who question and insult the world's great religions and the contents of the Holy Books, who call for such books to be burnt and for places of worship to be destroyed.

Those were the hallmarks of the Nazi regime in 1930s. The declaration of the Atlantic Charter of Four Freedoms (freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear), the establishment of the United Nations and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, were intended to make these terrible deeds a thing of the past.

When Malaya obtained Merdeka in 1957, our federal constitution expressly stated that freedom of religion is an entrenched, inalienable and fundamental right.

Yet in the months leading up to last weekend's elections, Umno's propaganda tool, Utusan Malaysia gave such pronouncements by the likes of Ibrahim Ali wide and extensive publicity. They were also selected to run as candidates.

One hopes that with the decisive defeats of Perkasa leaders Ibrahim Ali and Zulkifli Noordin, Umno will respect the will of the electorate and cease such abominable conduct. Umno must recognise that we are a moderate, tolerant people who accept plurality and diversity.

NONESecondly, the youth of Malaysia must not lose heart or give up hope. Those in the country must continue to engage in the reform movement. Wednesday night's mammoth rally was dominated by youths of all races. The experience was exhilarating.

The Global Bersih campaign opened the eyes of many Malaysians abroad. Millions of them are active in the social media. Thousands of them returned home to vote. You are our best and the brightest. You have the world at your feet. Your talents, intelligence and industry are recognised worldwide. You must not give up on Malaysia.

Stay steadfast for Malaysia. We need you to defeat BN at the earliest opportunity.

