

## **Zahid proves BN not interested in fairer elections**

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**By Tony Pua**

MP SPEAKS Newly-appointed Home Affairs Minister Zahid Hamidi told Malaysians in Utusan Malaysia to leave the country if they are not happy with the outcome of the 13th general election. He gave the excuse that Malaysia has inherited the first-past-the-post system from the United Kingdom, which is also utilised in many Commonwealth states.

Therefore he argued that despite Pakatan Rakyat achieving 51.78 percent of the popular vote, our adopted system allows for a party or coalition with lower popular vote to win 60 percent of the seats in Parliament.

Zahid Hamidi is in effect demonstrating his utter contempt and arrogance by telling Malaysians who want to improve our electoral system and prevent blatant abuses via gerrymandering to leave the country.

In the ensuing uproar, first-term and newly-appointed Youth and Sports Minister, Khairy Jamaluddin tried to diffuse the controversy by telling reporters that the "leave Malaysia" comment was the Umno vice-president and home minister's personal view. He claimed that it is not the view of Prime Minister Najib Razak's administration.

However, at the same time, Zahid Hamidi came out to defend his article claiming there is nothing wrong with his comments because he wasn't racist.

The statements by these two ministers make a complete mockery of Najib's 'new' administration, and leave Malaysians completely stunned dumbfounded.

First of all, who is Khairy to claim that the "leave Malaysia" comment is Zahid's personal comment and not that of the Najib administration? Did Najib appoint Khairy as his official spokesperson to the extent that Khairy can dismiss outright the comments made by the Umno vice-president? Or was it instead, only Khairy's "personal view" that Zahid's comments was the latter's personal view?

It appears that Khairy has been completely discredited because the prime minister has himself remained completely silent over the issue. Zahid has on the other hand come out with all guns blazing defending his "leave Malaysia" statement, while ignoring the "personal view" issued by Khairy.

Unfortunately Zahid's only defence for his statement was that he wasn't making a racist statement. Zahid obviously doesn't take the criticisms by Malaysians seriously as we never accused him of making a racist statement here. We are accusing him of being arrogant and contemptuous of the rights of Malaysians to a freer and fairer electoral system.

Malaysians are fully aware that the first-past-the-post system does indeed grant disproportionate allocations of seats relative to the percentage popular vote. However, the system in Malaysia has been abused by BN to the extent where the gap between the constituencies with the least number of voters such as Putrajaya (15,791) and Padang Rengas (28,518) won by BN, compared to those with the biggest population such as Kapar (144,159) and Serdang (133,139) won by Pakatan Rakyat far exceeds acceptable reason.

One will not find such ridiculous discrepancies between constituencies in other advanced first-past-the-post democracies such as United Kingdom or Australia.

This is the reason why hundreds of thousands of Malaysians have gathered in various cities over the past week to demand a better electoral system, be it a fairer distribution of voters in all constituencies or a thoroughly revamped proportional representation system, or a mixture of both as practiced in certain other advanced democracies.

It is the right of ordinary Malaysians to demand free and fair elections.

Zahid Hamidi's continued defence of his comments proves that BN does not believe in free and fair elections and will once again use all necessary means to manipulate constituencies in the next general election.

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