

FPTP helps perpetuates 'minority rule', says PAS

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The government's adavance on the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system shows that it "enjoys" perpetuating minority rule by manipulating electoral boundaries, said PAS election director Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli.

He said the Election Commission's (EC) argument that there were very few countries which give up the system for proportional voting systems was flawed, because the system will not give an advantage to an incumbent government.

NONE" So any government would like to retain that kind of advantage (of making minority rule possible), because in such situations, delineation of constituencies play a very important role.

"This is where the ruling government benefits from the system, so naturally, not many countries would want to change to a system that is fairer but will, in the end, result in their loss," he said.

Speaking to Malaysiakini at the sidelines of PAS' open house function in Kuala Lumpur, the Kuala Kerai MP said that a situation where a government that has fewer votes controlling a majority of the seats should not arise.

EC deputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar had said during the 7th Annual Malaysian Student Leaders Summit that the FPTP system suits Malaysia better and that there are weaknesses in the whereas proportional voting systems.

Hatta said that the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reforms, of which he was a member, had studied countries that have implemented proportional voting systems and found it to be working properly.

Gerrymending

He said such systems can be tuned to suit Malaysia's requirements, such as using a mixed-member proportional system if locally-elected representatives are desired.

Meanwhile, PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli said Wan Ahmad's argument that minority rule exists in other countries as well is invalid because of serious gerrymandering and malapportionment of constituencies in Malaysia.

NONE“It is different in Malaysia because the gerrymandering allows for extremely wide variance between one constituency and another, whereas in places like the UK, Canada and Australia, even if there a minority government, it is not that far off from the wishes of the majority of the people...

“(This is) because the difference in size between one constituency to another is not that different because it is guarded by constitutional guarantees that the size is more or less the same,” he said when contacted today.

He added that Wan Ahmad’s statement today shows that the EC is "hell-bent" on protecting Umno’s interests because it is possible for Pakatan Rakyat to win most of the popular vote for several more elections to come.

With the help of gerrymandering and malapportionment, it would a government to be determined by just 20 to 30 percent of voters, said Rafizi.

In the last general election, Pakatan won 51 percent of the popular vote but controls only 89 of the parliament's 222 seats. BN controls the remaining 133 seats with 47 percent of votes.

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