

Pakatan grilled over lack of 'principled stance' on fraud

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BERSIH TRIBUNAL The People's Tribunal today grilled a PKR representative over Pakatan Rakyat's failure in taking up electoral fraud complaints in constituencies where it did not think it could win an election petition.

UCSI 160910Tribunal member Azzat Kamaludin (left) had quizzed witness Akmal Nasir, who is PKR's #SiasatPRU13 coordinator, over Pakatan's failure to take up alleged ballot-buying complaints in the parliamentary constituency of Besut.

This was in relation to complaints by Election Commission (EC) officers there who had claimed that their returning officer had demanded their ballot papers in exchange for RM100.

PKR had submitted this complaint to the tribunal which held its hearing at Empire Hotel in Subang Jaya this morning.

"If you only take up cases where you lost by a small majority, to turn it around, are we to conclude that you don't care about breaches the Election Commission has committed or not? What's important is who wins," said Azzat.

To this, Akmal pointed out that the only avenue to take up such an issue is via an election petition, where the petitioner must prove that any violation was sufficient to change the election results.

'Costly endeavour'

As such, he said the opposition had decided to only file election petitions in constituencies lost with a small majority.

"The party (PAS) decided not to go (with an election petition in Besut) because it was lost by a large majority," he said.

Furthermore, he said the 20 election petitions by PKR alone had cost around RM1 million.

"We are instead presenting the evidence here so that this can be a platform for the complaints," he added.

At this, conducting officer Gurdial Singh Nijar noted that there are weaknesses in the electoral system as there is no incentive to take up electoral fraud, especially if a party won in the constituency, as doing so would nullify their own victory.

"The sanctity of the election must not be dependent on if you win or lose," he said.

Adding on, Azzat said: "I am disappointed to hear no moral high ground will be claimed by anybody in enforcing election laws.

"It will only be taken up by the losing party. That is why you have the expression of sour grapes," he said.

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