

No to redelineation by EC, say PKR MPs

MalaysiaKini.com

Oct 6, 2014

PKR leaders vehemently oppose any effort by Election Commission to increase the number of parliamentary seats for the coming 14th general election, which could be held as early as 2016.

Pantai Lembah MP Nurul Izzah Anwar (left) said that it is in hers and other MPs' best interest that any redelineation exercise be carried out in a fair manner.

“Our fate as parliamentarians depend on this redelineation exercise,” she said at a recent forum titled ‘Electoral Reform and Delimitation’ held in Penang.

The forum, which was moderated by Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin and included Penang Institute fellow Wong Chin Huat and Tindakan Malaysia's PY Wong as speakers, was held at the Penang Legislative Assembly last week.

Nurul Izzah said those who are in charge of the country’s election process cannot be the same individuals who handle the redelineation exercise, which includes the possibility of increasing the number of seats.

If this happens, the outlook for Pakatan Rakyat would not be optimistic, she added.

“What is the point of continuing this process? We already have the most number of MPs shouting in Parliament,” said the PKR vice-president.

“As a taxpayer, we have to decide whether we want more MPs or do we want to get rid of the useless ones and replace them with quality ones,” she added.

'Decision based on pragmatism'

“This decision cannot be made by Election Commission although it may be supported by Umno or PAS. It must be a decision based on pragmatism and the needs of the electorate,” she stressed.

Nurul Izzah, the two term MP, won her seat in the last May 5 polls despite facing an increase of about 8,000 voters (including 2,000 members of the police force) in her constituency.

However, Nurul Izzah express hope that the EC will not treat the protest against the increase of seats as merely “academic”.

She said she hoped it would not be similar to protests against over-development in her

constituency which she opposed but was carried out by DBKL regardless.

“We hope the EC will not bulldoze the redelineation exercise despite our protest.

“Why do we go through elections when the outcome is expected?

“As an MP, I have no shame, no qualms, in admitting that we have sufficient MPs. We should reduce the number of cabinet members and maintain the 222 MPs we have now,” she said.

Although the Election Commission has denied that a motion on redelineation would be tabled in Parliament when it sits tomorrow, PKR is concerned as the last exercise under former Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi’s leadership in 2002 resulted in 25 new seats.

The opposition only won one - the Bukit Gelugor seat which was held by deceased DAP national chairman Karpal Singh.

Article 46 of the EC Act stipulates the number of elected representatives in the Dewan Rakyat can change upon the redelineation exercise carried out by the EC, followed by a constitutional amendment in Parliament.

However, redelineation can only be done after an interval of not less than eight years between two re-delineation exercises.

There is also a mandatory deadline of two years for the process to be completed, after which, the EC needs a two-thirds majority support in Parliament and the state assemblies for the new constituency boundaries to be approved.

Sim (left) urged that if indeed a redelineation exercise would be carried out, there should not be much difference in the number of votes between constituencies.

Sim said Pakatan wants to participate in the delination exercise to ensure a fair outcome for all parties.

“Does Pakatan and other parties support any increase in seats? Can we stop it?

“BN needs only 15 MPs to support the motion to propose for EC to increase the number of seats in the coming general elections,” Sim said.

“How can the people block this effort? We need only 100 voters or 22,200 for 222 seats to object a new boundary, and and call for a local enquiry on the matter,” he added.

The EC has denied that it will table any motion in Parliament for a redelineation.

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