

**Najib's ratings slide after short-lived rise**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's approval ratings has dived six percent to 48 percent taking the PM back to June levels.

This was despite enjoying a rise in approval between June to August, independent pollster Merdeka Center said.

It added that the number of respondents unsatisfied with Najib also spiked from 38 percent in August to 45 percent this month.

"In our view, the reduction in the approval rating figures was likely tied to the fuel subsidy reduction measure on 2nd October 2014," it said.

The survey was conducted on 1005 voters from Oct 11 to 26.

The premier's approval ratings were at an all-time low in January, when 52 percent were unhappy with the PM's performance while 42 percent were satisfied.

The January figures were published by Merdeka Center for the first time today.

"We did not release it at that point of time (in January) partly because we were doing it as part of the additional question on another survey," Merdeka Center director Ibrahim Suffian told Malaysiakini when contacted.

He said the centre also did not release the August figures immediately, despite Najib's ratings hitting a relative high of 54 percent.

He added Najib's ratings suffered tremendously then due to the series of subsidy cuts at the end of 2013, including for petrol, flour, sugar, cooking oil, and a hike in electricity tariffs.

Since such surveys are not part of the public quarterly survey done by the centre, he said that they sometimes chose not to release the figure.

Citing the August survey result as example, which saw Najib's approval rating reached 54 percent, he said that the centre also did not release the result immediately.

'Stoking racial sentiments'

Meanwhile, most Malaysians surveyed this month said that they were either "angry" or "dissatisfied" with the government.

Six percent polled were angry while 43 percent were dissatisfied. This is compared to 38 percent who were happy and a significant 13 percent who were either unsure or refused to answer.

"We attribute this to public dissatisfaction, likely arising from concerns over likely cost of living increases, due to fuel price increases, as well as depressed commodity prices in rural areas of the country," it said.

The survey also found the Malay community split in the middle, with half polled saying they were happy with the state.

This is nonetheless a dip from August levels where 58 percent gave their thumbs up to the government.

Forty-five percent of Indians polled this month were happy and a significantly lower 13 percent of Chinese shared the same sentiment.

Correspondingly this month, more people surveyed believe the country is heading in the wrong direction.

Forty-nine percent polled said Malaysia is going south, a markedly higher proportion compared to in August, when 44 percent felt the same.

In contrast, 41 percent felt it is going in the right way compared to 42 percent in August.

"The negative sentiments were largely driven by concerns over cost of living increases, the general condition of the economy, as well as worries over the stoking of racial sentiments and public service delivery.

"Those who felt the country was on the positive track based their views on the prevailing sense of peace and security, visible economic and infrastructure development and continued welfare assistance from the government."

Following the trend since 2009, the Chinese remain pessimistic about the nation's future, with only a fifth believing things were going the right way.

This is, however, an improvement from a dismal 14 percent in August.

Peace and harmony

Meanwhile, fewer Malays and Indians surveyed this month believed the country is moving in the right direction.

Although most optimistic on this front, Malays, too show signs of wariness with 51 percent saying the country is going the right way compared to 52 percent in August.

A corresponding 41 percent of Indians believed things are on the up, compared to 52 percent two months ago.

According to the pollster, those who have a dim view of Malaysia's future cite high costs of living and unfavourable economic conditions as top concerns.

On the other hand, the ones who believed things are doing well cite peace and harmony and an improving economy.

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