

Bersih accuses PM, DPM of vote buying, drubs EC over inaction
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Election watchdog Bersih has accused Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his second in command Ahmad Zahid Hamidi of breaching election laws.

In a media statement titled 'Election Commission should haul up Deputy Prime Minister Zahid Hamidi for bribery and undue influence', Bersih also claimed that the EC is giving a free hand to political parties to indulge in vote buying and corrupt practices.

Therefore, Bersih demanded Zahid and all other ministers end the distribution of resources, be it in kind, cash or promises, to the people of Sarawak solely for the purposes of securing votes in the coming election.

The watchdog claimed that reports revealed blatant use of public funds to openly support candidates that are allied to the ruling coalition.

"It is unfettered political financing where state and federal funds (and hence it is public funds) are audaciously used to finance candidates' winning.

"Such unfair acts create unequal access for contesting candidates as it allows those with greater capacity to obtain funds to ascend political hierarchy and win seats during general elections. This further undermines electoral fairness," it added.

Bersih urged the EC to hold offenders accountable without fear or favour, and called on the public to continue collecting evidence of election misconduct, make police reports and publicise the cases.

"In the event that investigations are not carried out by the EC, legal action may still be taken after the elections," it said.

Bersih also provided details of such alleged abuses involving the deputy prime minister.

The watchdog said just a day before the police's general operations force in the Kuching camp cast their advance votes, Zahid made a promise of RM250,000 as follows:

- An allocation of RM100, 000 for a surau and chapel respectively for Muslim and Christian General Operations Force (PGA) members; and
- Another RM50, 000 for the Police Families Association (Perkep).

Following this, Bersih quoted him as telling the PGA personnel, "Now let's see first, cross who (pangkah siapa)?"

Other pledges by Zahid include:

- RM500,000 for a school in Miri if BN candidate Lee Kim Shin wins in the Senadin constituency; and
- Announced an allocation of RM70 million to build a bridge at Kampung Long Lama which is located at the Telang Usan constituency.

As for Najib, Bersih said the prime minister violated the law when he promised an "allocation totalling RM54.3 million for extension of a water mains and upgrading of existing pipelines".

Apart from this, the watchdog noted that he also announced an allocation of RM1 million from the federal government to the St Jude Church and the Sarawak state government matched the allocation with another RM1 million.

At a press conference this morning, PKR vice-presidents Nurul Izzah and Tian Chua also raised the same issue.

Zeroing in on Zahid, Nurul said the issue continues on a daily basis by the same minister with no action being taken.

Responding to a question, she said PKR is mulling filing reports with the EC and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

"If you talk about the modus operandi, we have done so many police reports, complaints to the MACC but to no avail," she said.

Similarly, Tian Chua said if the EC is fair and firm in executing the law to ensure the people are not denied a clean election, there is no need for political parties to make reports.

Therefore, he urged the commission to at least issue a warning to Zahid and other politicians.

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