

EC to face power of persuasion
Malaysiakini.com
July 09, 2010

The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih) 2.0 has returned after an absence of two years, this time minus political parties in its line-up, vowing not to take to the streets - for now - to achieve its aims.

In its reincarnated form, Bersih's first major act was to hand over a memorandum listing 15 electoral reform recommendations to the Election Commission (EC) this morning.

Among the recommendations was one that urged the EC to take every possible step to register the over four million new voters nationwide.

Coalition chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan said they have received many complaints of obstruction in registering new voters, and it is the EC's responsibility to assist them in getting onto the electoral roll.

Bersih 2.0 is also demanding that any and all reports of election offences be investigated and action taken if wrong-doing is proven.

NONE "I believe there is enough power there (Election Offences Act) and I believe the law is clear enough to cover some of the reported instances of election offences," she said after handing over the memorandum to the EC.

"I think it's well covered, it's just a question of the authority taking action... there is no point having an election offences law if we are not going to enforce it."

Ambiga, a former Bar Council chairperson, said the memorandum is part of the reborn coalition's aim at striking up a dialogue with all stakeholders, especially the EC.

Declaring Bersih 2.0 as purely civil society-led, she said they have no intention of holding major rallies as was done previously for now, focusing instead on public education.

"If people are willing to talk to us and bring changes, there is no need to hold rallies. We want to engage with both the opposition and the BN government," she said.

She said the Bersih 2.0 will be a purely civil society movement, adding that political parties are no longer in the coalition.

The decision to drop the political parties from the coalition came at meeting held at the end of last year and official launching of this new Bersih is scheduled for September, she said.

NONE Ambiga (right) added that their long term goal is to see the return of local council elections and polls also for senators which is provided for in the federal constitution.

"But for the immediate term, we must make sure (elections are) clean and fair," she said.

She added that the public also needs to be educated on the delineation process which was last done eight years ago.

"Many people are not aware that they can actually participate in this process and have the

right to give their views.

"Delineation is critical because there are guidelines under the federal constitution that out to be followed. We want to engage the EC on this," she said

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/136863>