

**Abdullah's best chance for everlasting fame**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Mar 31, 2008**  
**Kenny Gan**

In the aftermath of the 12th general elections with the stunning losses of the ruling party, our prime minister is feeling embattled. Various quarters are baying for his resignation and whether he survives or not is anybody's guess. This may be Abdullah's last term and there is a fair chance he may not last until the next GE. MCPX

But no matter what happens, this is an opportunity for him to push through wide-ranging reforms and be remembered as a Reformist PM rather than as a Pointless PM. I believe that Abdullah is basically a decent man but lacks political courage to push through reforms.

This time however, he should throw caution to the winds as his political survival is no longer guaranteed. Here are some of the reforms Abdullah should push through before he goes down.

- 1). Set up the IPCMC to act as a watchdog for the police. This was recommended by the police royal commission and all NGOs are clamouring for it.
- 2) Thoroughly reform the judiciary to separate the executive and judicial powers. Set up an independent Judicial Appointments Commission so that judges are not under pressure to be pro-government to further their careers.
- 3) Take the ACA out of the PM's Dept. and make it answerable to Parliament. Placing the ACA under politicians is hogwash.
- 4) Free up the press. Do away with the annual licensing requirement and encourage political parties to give up their ownership of newspapers. Failing that, allow new independent dailies to be set up.
- 5) Repeal the ISA except for suspected terrorism cases with court orders to be obtained from a judge before the act is invoked. The Hindraf 5 should be freed without delay.
- 6) Repeal the Universities and University Colleges Act to allow students to take part in the political process of the country. How do we build future leaders if we deny them the right to be politically aware?
- 7) All government contracts should be awarded by open tenders. Negotiated contracts are nothing more than a vehicle for cronyism and corruption.
- 8) Reform the Election Commission to make it truly independent and tighten up suspicious procedures like postal votes. The use of indelible ink should be legislated. Remember that BN may need a fair EC if it ever finds itself in the opposition.
- 9) Review and re-negotiate all public infrastructure contracts which are one sided and disadvantage the consumers while guaranteeing high profits for concessionaires.
- 10) Last but not least, revert to the original aims of the NEP which is to assist needy people of all races.

To be sure, most of the ills which need to be corrected were due to former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad who inflicted severe damage on our democratic institutions. Abdullah inherited a bad system but he did nothing to reform it. The freer space for the opposition to operate compared to Mahathir was due to inaction rather than any positive action on his part.

If Abdullah can accomplish most of the above, he may find to his astonishment that his political survival is now assured because the people are now solidly behind him. Furthermore, he has taken the wind out of the oppositions' sails and the prospect of BN regaining its 2/3rds majority at the next elections is looking good.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news//80639>