

66 NGOs press for fresh elections in Perak
Malaysiakini.com
Feb 25, 09
Andrew Ong

Fresh polls in Perak is the only proper and democratic solution to the current political impasse which has crippled the state, said 66 civil society groups in a joint statement today.

The groups argued that the current method used to oust the Pakatan Rakyat state government, did not adopt democratic practices such as moving a no-confidence vote against Menteri Besar Mohd Nizar Jamaluddin in the state assembly.

The joint statement further states that arbitrary withholding of royal consent for the dissolution of the state assembly, without proper justification, was also damaging to the country's separation of powers between the monarchy and the state.

"To oust a government, a vote of no-confidence must be carried out on the floor of Parliament or State Legislative Assembly where debates and deliberation may take place.

"Whether or not permissible by the letter of law, audience with the ruler or statutory declarations cannot be the substitute for a formal no-confidence vote," read the joint statement.

As a no-confidence vote has not been passed in the state assembly, the 66 groups hold that Mohd Nizar is still the legitimate menteri besar of Perak.

Affirm parliamentary democracy

The groups added that the appointment of the second state government was ultra-vires (beyond legal powers) and the use of the police and other state apparatus to protect the new government damages both parliamentary democracy and the constitutional monarchy in Perak.

"We call upon all Malaysians to express support to the above position to affirm parliamentary democracy and the constitutional monarchy.

"We must work together so that good sense may prevail in the palace, amongst the political elites and the general public.

"Returning to democratic and constitutional principles is the only way out to ensure political stability and political will to stay focused and deal with the imminent economic recession," concluded the joint statement.

Among the 66 signatories are All Women's Action Society (Awam), Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram), Kuala Lumpur-Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall civil rights committee and Selangor Malaysian Indians Association (Mindas).