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# Signal for BN to reinvent itself

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The general election results are a signal for Barisan Nasional to take stock and reinvent itself.

BN's focus, said panel members of the ISIS Forum on the 2008 General Election Results: Outcome and Implications for Malaysia, yesterday, should now be on promoting untainted personalities and addressing issues that concern the people such as crime and high cost of living.

"These issues need certain determination to solve," said International Movement for a Just World president Dr Chandra Muzaffar

He said with 140 seats at the federal level, it was a comfortable representation.

"The erosion of support at state level is more serious."

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*Dr Chandra Muzaffar  
International Movement for a Just World president*

Chandra said Sabah and Sarawak should be "rewarded" with a greater role in cabinet and other institutions of governance like government-linked companies.

"This will contribute to regional integration."

On ethnic relations, Chandra said BN had problems handling the issues. "Now that the landscape has changed, the opposition will also have to face this problem."

He added that BN and the opposition parties which controlled five states would have to find a way to work together.

"It (the working relationship) has to be managed in a rational and sensible manner... otherwise it could cause problems," said Muzaffar.

Another speaker, Professor Datuk Shamsul Amri Baharuddin of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Institute of Ethnic Studies (better

known by its Malay acronym KITA) said while BN had secured victories in the past based on its consistent policies and agenda, the same could not be said of the opposition as the parties did not have the same objective.

Institute of Strategic Analysis and Policy Research's deputy chairman Rita Sim said low voter turnout affected the BN.

She said up to 70 per cent of those who did not vote were Malays. "The question to ask is why were they not interested in this election. Are they so content or are they fed up with the government?"

The forum was chaired by ISIS chairman Datuk Seri Mohamed Jawahar Hassan in the morning, while former deputy prime minister Tun Musa Hitam chaired the afternoon session.

About 70 people from various universities, non-governmental organisations and government-linked companies participated in the forum.