

**For Perkasa, indelible ink a stain too far**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 20 — Perkasa asserted today that Malay voters could boycott coming polls if the Election Commission (EC) proceeds with its plan to use indelible ink.

Calling the move “outdated”, its secretary-general Syed Hassan Ali claimed this would result in a polls outcome favouring the federal opposition.

Drawing comparisons with lesser developed countries like Somalia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Cambodia, he said it was “embarrassing” for an advanced nation like Malaysia to adopt such a system.

“Who will benefit if the Malays do not vote? In all likelihood, I will not vote as well if the decision to use indelible ink stands.

“And perhaps many Perkasa members would not vote as well,” he warned in a statement here.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Yusof announced yesterday the commission’s decision to use indelible ink in the next general election to prevent multiple voting, fulfilling a key demand by the Bersih 2.0 coalition for electoral reform.

Syed Hassan, however, insisted today that the push for indelible ink was orchestrated by those hoping to discourage the community from voting.

“Perkasa believes it came from those who in actual fact do not want to use the ink but because it is a way to discourage the Malays and Muslims from voting, they pushed for it.

“Think carefully before implementing this decision,” he said.

Last month, the Attorney-General cleared the way for the use of indelible ink in elections — one of the eight demands by Bersih 2.0 — when he told a parliamentary panel only a minor change in electoral regulations was required.

Panel head Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili said Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail had informed the parliamentary panel on electoral reform that “either a constitutional amendment or a regulation change” was required so the EC can mark voters to avoid multiple voting.

It is understood Rule 19 of the Election (Conduct of Election) Regulations 1981 will have to be amended to allow the ink to be used. but this can be done at any time as it only requires approval from the Yang di-Pertuan Agong before Parliament is notified. The EC had planned to use indelible ink — which it purchased for RM2.4 million — during Election 2008 but backed out at the last minute, citing public order and security issues.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak formed the bipartisan polls panel after weeks of international condemnation following his administration’s clampdown on the July 9 Bersih 2.0 rally for free and fair elections.

The government also promised to adopt the movement’s eight demands, which include the

use of indelible ink, cleaning up the electoral roll and extending campaign periods, as part of the committee's scope.

The coalition of 62 NGOs has since gone on a nationwide campaign demanding that Putrajaya fulfil its eight demands before calling for a general election that is expected soon.

Opposition leaders, who strongly back Bersih, have warned of further rallies should the government fail to implement these demands.

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