

Bersih says only one out of eight demands met by polls panel

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 2 — Electoral reform movement Bersih 2.0 said today only one of its demands were met by the parliamentary select committee on electoral improvements and repeated its call for all eight to be implemented before federal polls expected early next year.

The coalition of 62 NGOs said in a statement only the use of indelible ink has been fully adopted while “two others are partially adopted but five other demands have yet to be included.”

“Bersih 2.0 reminds the committee, the Election Commission (EC) and the government that the eight demands are the bare minimum to ensure the 13th General Election will be reasonably clean and fair.

“The public will not tolerate any attempts to use the select committee to divert pressure on electoral reform. The EC and other relevant government agencies must implement Bersih 2.0’s eight demands and the recommendations made by the committee without delay,” it said.

Parliament adopted the bipartisan committee’s interim report yesterday which included 10 recommendations such as the use of indelible ink to prevent multiple voting, forming a royal commission of inquiry on claims that foreigners have been given the right to vote in Sabah and absentee voting.

Bersih 2.0 said its demand to clean up the electoral roll was only partially addressed with an audit of the list of voters but without a long-term mechanism such as automatic voter registration.

It said that absentee voting should include all civilian voters who are at least 250km away from home on polling day, instead of just those overseas or Sabahans and Sarawakians living in the peninsula and vice versa.

The other five demands not met are a minimum campaign period of 21 days, free access to media, strengthening public institutions, stopping corruption and ending dirty politics.

The select committee on electoral reforms was a response by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to the July 9 Bersih rally which saw tens of thousands pour into the streets of Kuala Lumpur to call for free and fair elections.

But opposition parties have warned of another mass rally after the prime minister refused to promise that polls will only be held after the panel has fulfilled its six-month term.

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