

Electoral reform committee can go on without Pakatan, says Nazri
The Malaysian Insider
September 15, 2011

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 15 — In what seems like a thinly veiled threat, the minister in-charge has said that the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reforms may be formed without opposition members in it.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz's stated to Bernama that there were no "must have opposition members" pre-condition for the PSC.

He was responding to Pakatan Rakyat (PR) saying its participation was incumbent on five demands being met.

Them being (1) the eight demands by the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections be accepted and for the Election Commission (EC) to implement the demands that fall within their jurisdiction; (2) the opposition and Barisan Nasional (BN) to jointly set the date for the general election; (3) to give ample room for the EC to carry out its responsibilities; (4) the issue of giving citizenship to foreigners be on the PSC discussion agenda; (5) and for every decision of the PSC to be implemented.

Nazri said that the government would have to be crazy to accept the unreasonable demands.

The minister in charge of Parliament said that all that was necessary was to fill the committee with nice MPs to validate it. He said the government was showing benevolence in inviting opposition members on since they were not legally required to do so.

He was speaking to media at a Hari Raya gathering hosted by Amanah Raya Berhad today.

Failure of PR taking up spots would mean the government will pass them to other lawmakers, Nazri added.

The Umno minister said the government's commitment to electoral reform was serious, and this has frightened the opposition.

He said they were making excuses to not participate in the PSC.

He was in agreement with ex-prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that it was the ruling government's prerogative when elections are to be held and not the oppositions.

He added that Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim understand the government's position since he was deputy prime minister.

The PSC was announced on August 15 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to reduce suspicion that the government was unfairly affecting the electoral process in Malaysia. The committee is to be headed by a minister, with five government MPs, three from PR and one independent.

The Malaysian Insider

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