

**Polls panel insincere public relations move, say activists, Malaysians**  
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**By Boo Su-Lyn**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 21 — Some activists and Malaysians who joined the Bersih rally have dubbed the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform as an insincere public relations exercise by Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Their remarks came after the prime minister said last Friday that the timing of general elections would not depend on the panel's proceedings.

"It appears that the PSC is not sincere and appears to be just an attempt to appease the people without seriously wanting to hear what the committee does," human rights lawyer Edmund Bon (picture) told The Malaysian Insider yesterday.

Bon, who is also the Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism & Human Rights (MCCHR) campaigner, added that Najib's statement on federal polls has confused voters.

Women's rights activist Ivy Josiah said Najib's remarks showed that the PSC was merely a "wasteful" public relations move.

"It's insulting the intelligence of Malaysians," Ivy told The Malaysian Insider.

"It's very disrespectful to all of Bersih's efforts...Citizens turned up (at the Bersih rally on July 9) because we want a fair and even playing ground," added the executive director of the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO).

Ivy also challenged the PM to specify the reforms that he had promised to implement immediately.

Najib formed the panel some five weeks after electoral reform movement Bersih 2.0 took to the streets of the capital city on July 9 to call for free and fair elections.

Nearly 50,000 people braved tear gas and water cannons at the rally despite a police lock down on the city.

Kindergarten principal Christine Lai, who marched at the rally, said it appeared that Najib was trying to please everyone.

"It (the PSC) is just to keep you quiet," said Lai, 51.

She stressed that electoral reforms should not be carried out partially before the general elections.

"If you want to clean up, you clean up the whole process. Elections have to be fair 100 per cent," she said.

Student Michael Loo, who also took part in the Bersih march, said the PSC was pointless if federal polls were to be called before the panel's recommendations were enforced.

"He (Najib) is belittling those people who took part in Bersih and any right-thinking person who hopes the best from the PSC...He's stepping on these people's hopes," said Loo, 24.

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