

No need to wait for PSC's reforms, Kit Siang tells EC
The Malaysian Insider
August 25, 2011
By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 25 — Lim Kit Siang wants the Election Commission (EC) to implement electoral reforms now, and not wait till the proposed parliamentary select committee (PSC) is formed in October.

The DAP adviser said EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Yusof's announcement this morning that all Malaysians abroad may soon be allowed to vote via post only proved that the authority can introduce reforms without the PSC.

"The EC must therefore spell out, clearly and unequivocally with no 'ifs' and 'buts', what are the electoral reforms based on the Bersih 2.0 eight demands which could be implemented immediately without waiting for any PSC and in time for the forthcoming general elections," he said in a statement here.

Abdul Aziz made the announcement during a three-hour media briefing today but remained non-committal when asked for a confirmation that the proposal would be implemented in time for the 13th general election and only said "hopefully". Presently, only civil servants, full-time students and their spouses residing abroad are allowed to register as postal voters.

He also said the EC was presently preparing the framework for the bipartisan PSC, which will be set up when during the coming Parliament session in October.

But he added that PSC's recommendations may not have to be implemented by the EC as the governing body for the country's elections unless they are made into law.

Lim (picture) accused the EC of "sitting" on Bersih 2.0's proposal for electoral reforms despite holding the power to introduce certain amendments to its present regulations.

"In fact, the onus is on the EC as it reflects most adversely on its efficiency, independence, professionalism and integrity, why it is unable to take immediate action without waiting for any PSC, to clean up the electoral roll to remove deceased persons, multiple voter registration under a single address on non-existent addresses, and phantom voters," he said.

In its first demand to "clean the electoral roll", Bersih 2.0 had alleged that the present roll is marred with discrepancies with records of multiple, non-existent or deceased persons and phantom voters registered to certain addresses. Other demands include the introduction of automatic voter registration, a minimum 21-day campaign period and the use of indelible ink to prevent double voting.

"It is (an) open secret that although the Constitution vests the EC with the powers and responsibilities to conduct elections, it is not an unusual especially in recent decades for the prime minister who dissolves Parliament to also fix the date for polling for the general election — and subserviently complied with by the EC.

This is most unconstitutional as it is the prerogative of the EC to determine the nomination and polling dates of general elections," said Lim.

He questioned if the EC was prepared to assert its independence by determining its own election dates and length of campaign periods without bowing to the ruling government's orders.

He also challenged Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to state if he is prepared to accept the concept of a "caretaker government" upon the dissolution of Parliament.

The "caretaker government" system, said Lim would ensure no abuse of public funds for the election campaign as it would be solely tasked to continue the day-to-day administration of the country until a new government is formed.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/no-need-to-wait-for-pscs-reforms-kit-siang-tells-ec/>