

Motion On PSC On Electoral Reform To Be Tabled In Parliament In October
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet today agreed to set up a parliamentary select committee (PSC) to look into strengthening the law and regulations pertaining to the electoral process.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said the Cabinet also agreed for the motion on the proposed PSC to be tabled at the next parliamentary sitting this October.

The Cabinet too agreed to meet with the Election Commission soon to discuss the framework of the committee which would be headed by a minister, Nazri told reporters at his office in parliament building, here, today.

Nazri said the committee would consist of nine parliamentarians -- five from the ruling government, three from the opposition and an independent.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had on Monday announced that a parliamentary select committee would be formed to look into ways to improve the country's electoral process.

Nazri said the motion on setting up the PSC would also be tabled before the Parliamentary Rights and Privileges Committee chaired by Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia, for approval.

He said with the establishment of the PSC, any proposal or amendment to the existing Elections Act would be tabled during the first session of parliament next year.

Nazri said the Cabinet also wanted the PSC to study various aspects, including the issue of using the biometric system and indelible ink, and on rules pertaining to the nomination of candidates in the general election and by-elections.

"The committee will also be given the task of discussing advance voting for those who cannot cast their votes on polling day and on allowing registered voters to vote in the elections although they are abroad.

"It will also hold roadshows and public hearings to gather views on measures to improve the electoral system."

On the suggestion that representatives of non-governmental organisations be part of the committee, Nazri said they did not have the right as "it is a parliamentary select committee".

"However, they can still get involved by attending the public hearings to give their opinions and suggestions."

Asked whether the PSC could present its report before the coming general election, he said: "I don't know when the next general election will be called, but the term of the current parliament will end in 2013.

"Therefore, I think the committee will be able to prepare its report before that."

On the demands made by the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih) with regard to the electoral process, Nazri said Bersih was not a special group and they could give their views during the public sessions.

Earlier, in a telephone interview by Bernama, Nazri said the Cabinet at its weekly meeting last Wednesday had discussed the opposition pact's demand for a special Dewan Rakyat sitting be convened to debate on the allegation of permanent residents being given voting rights.

The opposition pact comprising PKR, DAP and PAS had also sent a memorandum to the prime minister on Aug 8 to call for an emergency parliamentary sitting this month to debate on "the issue of permanent residents who have been registered as voters".

"The decision to set up a parliamentary select committee (on legal reform) was the outcome of the Cabinet meeting.

"Therefore, there is no need for a special parliamentary sitting on the matter as demanded by the opposition," Nazri said.

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