

**Government Firm Over Eligibility To Register As Voters - Hishammuddin  
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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 21 (Bernama) -- Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the government was clear and firm on the question of eligibility for registration as voters in the general election.

He said in a statement here Sunday that although processing of applications for citizenship, entry permits and late registration of births could be expedited by improving the system since two years ago, this did not involve any change in policy and conditions under the existing law and regulations.

"The ministry had early last week also held discussions with the Election Commission (EC) on updating records on Malaysian citizens registered as voters, in line with the government's proposed setting up of a parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform," he said.

Hishammuddin said updating of records by the ministry through the National Registration Department (NRD) was to streamline the records with that maintained by the EC, while at the same time updating the records fast from time to time to avoid any misperception or misunderstanding on the part of any quarters.

He said the ministry and NRD were doubling their efforts to ensure a system that was transparent and satisfactory to all parties, and wanted the database for citizenship and entry permit applications and late registration of births to be properly updated.

On the PSC, Hishammuddin said the Cabinet's decision to accept the proposed setting up of the committee was the best step to address all questions and accusations thrown by the opposition at the government.

He said it was also the best opportunity for those young parliamentarians to offer their views and suggestions, especially on improving the country's electoral process as they were representing the voice of the young generation.

"The outcome will have a direct impact on the process and methods used all this while including by the Royal Malaysian Police. What can be done and cannot be done during an election campaign will be decided upon with the setting up of the PSC.

"After all the proposals have been approved, it is important for all departments and agencies involved to cooperate closely so that all the decisions made could be implemented well," he said.

The minister also said that the PSC on electoral reform was the best platform to prove to the people that the government had nothing to hide.

"We have always given the power to the people to determine whether they still want us (BN) or not. Based on this factor, we feel the people need to be given an accurate picture (of the electoral process) so that they will not easily fall for baseless accusations," he said.

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