

**Nazri: Demands from 'legal' NGOs to be included for electoral reform (Update)**  
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**By Hemananthani Sivanandam**

KUALA LUMPUR (Aug 22, 2011): The eight demands by several non-governmental organisations and members of parliament will be included in the framework for the Parliamentary Select Committee on electoral reforms.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz said the eight demands by "legal" NGOs would be included in a memorandum prepared by the Election Commission (EC).

"The memorandum will be submitted for the cabinet meeting on Sept 7. Once the memorandum gets the approval of the cabinet, then we will inform the Rights and Privileges Committee in Parliament," Nazri told a press conference today after meeting EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Yusof.

When asked if the NGOs Nazri referred to include the Coalition For Free and Fair Elections (Bersih), he said: " I am sure some of them are legal."

The eight demands brought forward by the NGOs are:

- \* Strengthening public institutions
- \* Stop corruption
- \* Stop dirty politics
- \* Free and fair access to media
- \* Cleaning the electoral roll
- \* Reform postal votes and advanced voting (for those stationed overseas)
- \* The use of indelible ink and the EC's counter proposal to implement biometric system
- \* Campaign period

Nazri said once the memorandum is endorsed by the Parliament's Rights and Privileges Committee, then a motion will be brought by him on the formation of the Parliamentary Select Committee on electoral reform on the first day of the Parliament meeting on Oct 3.

He said the Rights and Privileges Committee will also look through the list of names submitted by the government and the Opposition, on the members of the PSC; and the PSC will have six months to deliberate on the framework.

The PSC announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak recently to put to rest any form of suspicion of manipulation of the election roll, will comprise nine MPs – five from BN, three from the Opposition and an independent – and will be chaired by a cabinet minister.

Asked if the PSC will cease its duty should there be early elections, Nazri said: "That is not my problem. My concern is forming the committee to look into all the proposals given by the public and to work within the period of the Parliament, which should expire in April 2013. That is the perimeter that I'm working on because I don't know when the election will be held," he said.

"We are looking into these things as a preventive measure. It doesn't mean that the elections before this under the present laws have been unfair.

"For example, there have been allegations that there were incidents of double voting but this has not been proven. However the PSC is a preventive measure to stop these things from happening.

"What is the point of having a select committee if we don't look into all these. We don't want, as they claim, to be doing window dressing. We will look at this from the point of prevention," he said.

On calls from the Opposition that their leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim head the committee instead of a minister, Nazri said it is easier for a minister to head the committee as he would have easier access to government departments.

"It will be much easier for the minister to give instructions to the civil servants. I think it's a psyche that it is easier for civil servants to receive instructions from a minister, rather than someone else.

"Also, the chair must command the respect of the committee and we are in the opinion that in past practices, having a minister as the chair makes the work of the select committee much easier," he added.

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