

Bersih: Implement electoral reforms before next GE
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PETALING JAYA (Aug 23, 2011): The announcement that eight demands by several non-governmental organisations and members of parliament will be included in the framework for the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reforms has been received with mixed reactions.

Bersih steering committee member Maria Chin Abdullah said while the coalition welcomes the announcement; the demands should be implemented before the next general election is called.

"I think it is good that the demands are recognised but where Bersih is concerned, we want to see it materialise.

"We want the reforms to be in place before the next elections," Maria told theSun, saying the existence of PSC would be pointless otherwise.

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

Maria, however, was concerned over the EC's proposal to implement the biometric system. She said people are still in the dark over it and the EC must explain the system to the people.

Meanwhile, PAS vice president Salahuddin Ayub said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak must give an assurance not to call for a general election while the PSC is deliberating.

Najib said last week that the next general election can be held at anytime and is not bound by the work of the PSC.

He said the government would, however, strive to implement any recommendation made by the committee before the elections.

DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang today said the EC and government should announce which demands could be immediately implemented even before Parliament meets in October.

He said the Cabinet should revoke the ban on Bersih 2.0 and drop all charges against the some 1,600 Malaysians arrested for taking part in the July 9 rally, including those wearing Bersih t-shirts.

"The Cabinet should also consult with and secure the agreement of the Pakatan Rakyat parties on the issue of the parliamentary select committee – its terms of reference, membership, time-line and other parameters," said Lim.

