

**No consensus, electoral reforms panel meets again tomorrow**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 27 — The bipartisan parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reforms extended its final meeting to tomorrow after members failed today to reach a consensus on several issues.

According to PKR deputy president Azmin Ali (picture), Pakatan Rakyat (PR) members in the committee had raised objections against the Election Commission (EC) during today's three-hour session, claiming the authority had failed to show its commitment to implementing reforms to the country's election process.

"So far we are not happy with the commitment shown by EC so we put forward our suggestions in the draft.

"That was the reason why we insisted that we should not conclude the meeting today, so the chairman agreed to extend it to another day to deliberate on the final report," he told reporters when met outside the meeting room in Parliament today.

"It was very unfortunate that after six months sitting in the committee, I don't see any courage on the part of the EC to undertake reform programmes for fair and clean elections."

The PSC was expected to wrap up discussions today on its final report on recommendations for electoral reform, which will be tabled in Parliament next Monday.

Among the key issues raised, said Azmin, were the alleged discrepancies found in the electoral roll, which he said the EC appeared to be lacking in "commitment" to address.

"We wanted the EC to have the courage to clean up the roll because the burden is not on political parties or Mimos (government technology adviser), but EC must show its commitment to undertake this process," he said.

The Gombak MP complained that in every meeting with the EC in the past, including public hearings and PSC discussions, PR representatives had to adduce new evidence to show proof that the current roll is rife with irregularities.

"Look at the 42,000 voters announced by EC last year as questionable.

"They promised the PSC that they will display these names and if those voters do not turn up, then they will remove the names. (But) until today, these names have not been removed," he said.

Next, Azmin also pointed out to EC's announced intention to employ 240,000 officials and election workers for the coming polls.

PR, he said, "will not agree" to such a proposition, particularly as the EC's plans are to allow the group to vote via postal ballots.

One of the PSC's key intention, Azmin pointed out, was to scrap postal balloting as it was deemed an easily abused system.

He revealed that the PSC had today also deliberated on other key demands for electoral reforms, such as free and fair access to the media during campaigning for polls, political funding, the extension of the campaign period and allowing overseas voting for all Malaysians.

"We will have to revisit these recommendations tomorrow and contribute our ideas before the report is finalised," he said, adding that tomorrow's meeting will start at 11.30am.

Speaking to reporters later, PSC chairman Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili expressed satisfaction at the commitment by all committee members to ensure that the panel's goals are met.

He would not, however, divulge further information on the matter, noting that the panel would first have to table its report in Parliament next week.

"I think it is too early to make a judgement," he said, when asked to comment on Azmin's statement.

"I believe in the spirit of improvement, all these things will be taken care of," he added

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