

Violent GE Campaign Gives Negative View To Outside World

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KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- Incidents of violence and disturbances during the 13th general election campaign (GE13) can raise a negative perception of the political practice in Malaysia, according to some political analysts and academicians.

They said that while Malaysia was heading towards a developed nation status in seven years, political parties should be practising mature politics by respecting the struggle of opposing parties.

Chairman of the Independent Monitoring Election Commission Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, when contacted by Bernama, said incidents like explosions at campaign and ceramah areas should not have taken place in a peaceful, multiracial nation.

He said the culture of political violence should cease immediately so that it would not spread and become a culture of the young generation.

On Tuesday, a ceramah organised by the Nibong Tebal Barisan Nasional (BN) was marred by an explosion behind the stage of the party's operations room when Penang Gerakan chairman Datuk Dr Teng Hock Nan was delivering a ceramah.

Yesterday, the Jelapang BN operations room, located in front of Sekolah Kebangsaan Buntong, Ipoh, Perak became a target of petrol bombs by a group of men.

Syed Ibrahim he urged all candidates of GE13 to make the most of the 15-day campaign period allocated by the Election Commission and avoid any remarks which could raise the ire of their supporters against the opposing parties.

On April 3, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, when announcing the dissolution of the Dewan Rakyat said: "If there is a transition of power, whether at the federal or state level, it will and must take place peacefully and in an orderly manner."

Meanwhile, political analyst Prof Datuk Dr Zainal Abidin Borhan was of the opinion that insinuations and innuendoes between political parties were merely 'democratic festivals', but they should not touch on communal sensitivities.

Zainal Abidin also said that the campaign for GE13 must proceed in a peaceful and orderly manner, as it also involved students, to ensure that the group truly understood the nation's democratic system.

Prof Datuk Dr Zainal Kling, who holds the Tun Abdul Ghafar Baba Chair at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, said all parties must practise mature politics capable of building human capital, and violence should not be committed on the people who had already faced 12 general elections.

He said Malaysians should draw a lesson from the intrusion in Lahad Datu recently which killed many members of the armed forces. He said political violence would not only make the nation chaotic but would also give a bad image of Malaysia.

The Umno Veterans' Club secretary, Datuk Mustapha Yaakub, said the incident in Nibong Tebal seemed to have brought in the pattern of political violence taking place abroad.

Peninsular Malaysia Malay Students Coalition (GPMS) deputy president Ezaruddin Abd Rahman said the young fence-sitters would have a negative perception of the violence in politics and this would dim their fervour to cast their votes for the first time.

He said the public should think of the effect on peace enjoyed all this while such as getting numerous aid from the government irrespective of race or religion.

The young should not be afraid to go out and vote and be confident of the capability of the security forces in protecting national harmony, he added.

Civil servant Azwan Abd Razak, 50, regarded those who sought to trigger violence in politicking as inviting woe to themselves.

Private sector worker Lin Jia Jun, 24, who will be voting for the first time, said violence was not a Malaysian culture and the culprits must be dealt with severely.

Government pensioner Mohamad Awang, 63, was disenchanted with certain people who used 'dirty tactics' in politicking and who could be regarded as disrespectful and uncivilised.

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