

Bersih withholds recognition of BN win amid fraud row
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By Emily Ding

PETALING JAYA, May 6 — Election watchdog Bersih said it will withhold recognition of Barisan Nasional's (BN) victory in Election 2013 until they have verified reports of electoral fraud from yesterday's polls.

Bersih co-chairman Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan said the group has received reports of electoral fraud, phantom voters and other irregularities in the voting and vote-counting process from electoral observers on the ground.

"Bersih is withholding recognition of the new government that will be formed until it has had the time to study the reports it has received," Ambiga said at a news conference here today.

"The extent of these reports has led us to question some of the results in the 2013 general elections."

Ambiga today announced that Bersih will set up a "People's Tribunal" in the coming weeks to examine all the evidence on alleged electoral fraud and other irregularities.

The tribunal will hear from witnesses, including candidates who have been affected by electoral fraud.

She said reports suggested the extent of the fraud perpetrated was extensive enough to have affected the results of the elections.

"There is no doubt in our minds that these elections have not been clean and fair," she remarked.

"We will be able to get the evidence together and draw conclusions from whatever is out there."

Election 2013 saw a flood of complaints over the lack of permanence in the indelible ink introduced to prevent repeat voting, allegations of "phantom voters" being flown and bussed in to marginal constituencies, as well as money politics.

Pictures and videos purporting to depict such allegations were widely shared on the Internet, although their authenticity is yet to be confirmed.

Today, Ambiga also pointed out a few instances of voting stations suddenly losing electricity when vote recounts were taking place, which have raised suspicions of "cheating" by BN.

She then called for all members of the Election Commission (EC) to resign immediately for having "clearly failed" to ensure a clean, free and fair election process.

In a symbolic move, she asked all Malaysians to wear an item of black clothing for the next month, replicating the blacked-out profile pictures that have been going around on the popular social network Facebook since the election result was announced yesterday.

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