

Nurul Izzah moots lower voting age as part of reconciliation reforms
Malaysian Insider
May 15, 2013

KUALA LUMPUR, May 15 — Nurul Izzah Anwar has said she will propose to lower the voting age, return independence to the judiciary, curb ministerial power in the Official Secrets Act (OSA) and introduce a right to freedom of information, as part of an extensive series of private members bills the newly re-elected PKR MP for Lembah Pantai will table in Parliament.

Malaysia's polarised society can only be reconciled through legal reforms, she said today in proposing an extensive series of changes to existing legislation she said were needed to bring about a "multiracial democracy at peace with itself".

The second-term Lembah Pantai MP said she will push forward her proposals to change the laws when Parliament convenes — anticipated to be as early as next month — in response to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's call for reconciliation following the keenly-contested Election 2013.

"Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's call for reconciliation after Malaysia's 13th general election is not credible so long as Barisan Nasional continues to exploit race-based politics to divide the communities in this country.

"Malaysians want change rather than 'reconciliation'. They voted for reform that entails a restoration of democracy to this country," she said.

At the top of her laundry list of proposed changes to the legislation was to amend Article 121(1) Federal Constitution to return power to the courts that had made it subservient to Parliament, and to tweak accordingly the Judicial Commissions Act that governs the promotion of judges. This, she said was necessary to return public confidence in the courts.

Nurul Izzah also proposed massive revamps to the electoral system, which has been the biggest bone of contention in the aftermath of the May 5 general election and which her father, Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, is still challenging.

She proposed to lower the voting age from 21 to 18. She also said she will push for automatic voter registration to be based on the National Registration Department's records to be made the basis of future electoral rolls.

With the Election Commission due to carry out a redelineation exercise this year and with more people moving out of the countryside and into the cities, Nurul Izzah proposed that the election regulator redraw the boundary lines to reflect a more balanced voter population ratio of 70:30 to combat claims of gerrymandering.

She also said she will push for a freedom of information law — which had been passed into state law in Selangor and Penang — to be enforced at the federal level to create transparency.

In addition, she called for the removal of a clause in the OSA that empowers ministers to label any document as a classified by mere gazette notification, and the Petroleum Act to be amended to open up the finances of state oil company Petronas to parliamentary scrutiny

instead of keeping it for the eyes of the prime minister only as is currently practised.

Nurul Izzah, who has previously championed for student rights, said she would push for the University and University Colleges Act (UUCA) to be revamped further to allow tertiary-level students to take a more active role in politics, including joining political parties as full members.

The Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA) that governs all print and broadcast media must also go, she said, and mooted that the industry be governed by a statutory self-regulatory mechanism through a media council that would cover print, broadcast and online media.

Nurul Izzah also said she would push to bring back local council elections and the set up of the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC), which had been recommended by an independent royal panel in 2005 to clean up the police force.

“When these reforms are implemented, we shall be on our way to a restoration of our democracy.

“We will have a genuine ‘reconciliation’ with our true national character as a multiracial democracy at peace with itself,” she said.

* This article was corrected to amend parts that previously reported Nurul Izzah as intending to propose the complete repeal of the OSA.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/nurul-izzah-moots-lower-voting-age-as-part-of-reconciliation-reforms/>