

DAP slams Zahid's 'arrogance and contempt' for unhappy Malaysians
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By Boo Su-Lyn

KUALA LUMPUR, May 17 — Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi is denying Malaysians the right to a better voting system by telling them to migrate if they are unhappy with Malaysia's first-past-the-post system, the DAP's Tony Pua said today.

The DAP publicity chief pointed out that although the first-past-the-post system allows political parties or coalitions to win elections despite losing the popular vote, Malaysia's electoral boundaries "have been excessively corrupted over the past decades".

Pua (picture) noted that in Election 2013 the smallest federal constituencies like Putrajaya and Padang Rengas, which were won by Barisan Nasional (BN), had 15,791 and 28,518 voters respectively compared to the largest constituencies like Kapar and Serdang, which were won by Pakatan Rakyat (PR), that have a whopping 144,159 and 133,139 voters respectively.

"One will not find such ridiculous discrepancies between constituencies in other advanced first-past-the-post democracies such as United Kingdom or Australia," Pua said in a statement.

The Petaling Jaya Utara MP added that the huge difference in the number of voters between the smallest and largest federal constituencies "goes to prove that our electoral system is manipulated to give the ruling Barisan Nasional an unfair advantage".

He also pointed out that the average size of a constituency that PR candidates won in the May 5 general election had 77,655 voters compared to just 46,510 voters in a typical BN constituency.

Ahmad Zahid wrote in Umno-owned Malay daily Utusan Malaysia yesterday that Malaysians needed to accept PR's failure to win federal power in Malaysia's first-past-the-post system, despite BN losing the popular vote for the first time since 1969 when it contested as the Alliance party then.

"The leaders of opposition parties, especially PKR and the DAP, have confused Chinese youths and their politically blind followers into wearing black to protest against the results of the 13th general election that they consider are in their favour, based on the popular vote," said Ahmad Zahid.

"If this group wants to accept the list system or the single transferable vote system as what is practised in republics, then they should migrate to such countries to practise their political beliefs," he added.

Pua, however, said today that Ahmad Zahid's comment reflected the "hypocrisy" of the BN government that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has promised will be inclusive.

"Such arrogance and contempt by the newly-appointed home minister and current Umno vice-president points to the fact that Umno-BN has no desire at all to seek 'national reconciliation' post the 13th general election.

"The fact that we have an imperfect electoral system in place is exactly the reason why the people are speaking up and expressing their disappointment and anger at the system," said Pua.

Tens of thousands of Malaysians have flooded five PR rallies throughout the country recently to protest against alleged vote-rigging in Election 2013 and to call for free and fair elections.

Election watchdog Tindak Malaysia said last year that one rural voter was worth an average of six urban voters, based on the way electoral boundaries were drawn.

Analysts have noted that BN retained federal power in Election 2013 by capturing the rural vote, with a significant chunk of its seats coming from Sabah and Sarawak, while middle-class and urban voters that are concentrated in larger constituencies had deserted the coalition for PR.

The Election Commission (EC) has announced that a redelineation exercise will begin at the end of this year.

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