

Cleaning up the electoral rolls is all talk, charges Ambiga
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As far as election watchdog Bersih is concerned, nothing has changed.

Not even the statement by the Election Commission (EC) that a special committee was cleaning the electoral rolls and that periodic reports would be made public.

It still wants the current set of EC officials to step down.

Bersih co-chairman Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan told The Malaysian Insider that the electoral body cannot be trusted to clean up the rolls.

"This is nothing new, they have been saying that they would clean up the electoral rolls for years and yet, we keep finding flaws.

"I don't believe them. They are just not doing a thorough job," she told The Malaysian Insider.

EC deputy chairman Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar had said that an internal committee was formed post-GE13 to clean up the electoral rolls to ensure the rolls for the next elections would be reliable and free from controversy.

Wan Ahmad had said EC officials from all states are working together to clean up the electoral rolls and the committee will issue a report this month and from time to time.

Ambiga, however, shot back saying that cleaning up the electoral rolls would involve "going to the ground to take a census".

"We don't see that happening."

She, however, called on the EC to work on a suggestion made during the on-going Sabah Royal Commission of Inquiry to delete the current electoral roll and re-register voters.

"Also, we have recommended to the EC that the United Nations, which has expertise in this area be brought in to help.

"They have done it in Bangladesh."

The lawyer and former Bar Council chairman also challenged the EC to involve civil societies and representatives from every political party in the cleaning-up exercise to ensure there were no irregularities.

"And, Section 9 (A) of the Election Act should be removed to allow the court to scrutinise the rolls," she added.

Section 9(a) reads: "After an electoral roll has been certified or re-certified, as the case may be, and notice of the certification or re-certification has been published in the Gazette as prescribed by regulations made under this Act, the electoral roll shall be deemed to be final and binding and shall not be questioned or appealed against in, or reviewed, quashed or set

aside by, any court."

Ambiga, however, maintained that despite these changes being promised by the EC, Bersih has not changed its stand that the top leaders in the electoral body resign from their posts.

She also praised Pakatan Rakyat for their suit to strike out the results of the 13th general elections of all 222 parliamentary seats, disband the discredited EC and order fresh polls due to the indelible ink fiasco, saying it was high-time that the EC faced the music for the "public fraud" brought up by the failed indelible ink.

"It is a tragedy that the EC has failed to see the seriousness of the issue."

Yesterday, PR filed a suit against the EC to strike out the results of all 222 parliamentary seats, disband the discredited EC and order fresh polls due to the indelible ink fiasco.

The May 5 polls were the subject of much controversy following allegations of fraud and irregularities including the ink which was easily washed off and a tainted electoral roll.

This brought on nationwide protests, including from Bersih which demanded that the top leadership of the EC step down for failing to carry out a clean and fair election. - July 16, 2013.

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