

Bersih People's Tribunal, the people's court on electoral fraud allegations begins
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The atmosphere at the Empire Hotel in Subang Jaya, where the Bersih People's Tribunal is being held, is rife with anticipation.

More than 150 people, including members of non-governmental organisations, lawyers from the Bar Council, academics, politicians and the public, have gathered in the hotel's ballroom where some 30 witnesses will give evidence for the next five days.

They will speak about fraud and irregularities which occurred in the 13th general election in May.

The makeshift courtroom has the six panellists up front while witnesses give their testimonies from a dock on the left of the room.

But representatives from the Election Commission (EC) - at the centre of today's proceedings - are nowhere in the room.

This is despite invitations sent to the EC, the police and Barisan Nasional secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, as reported by The Malaysian Insider yesterday.

Both the police and the EC declined the invitation while Tengku Adnan reportedly said he would not attend. EC deputy chairman Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar invoked the Federal Constitution in staying away, saying there was no provision for EC to join such tribunals.

However, that did not stop a police officer from the Subang district police headquarters to attend and record the proceedings.

"He wanted to record the proceedings, so we asked him to register himself with us and he kindly obliged," a member of the organising committee told The Malaysian Insider.

The Bersih People's Tribunal panel members - (from left) Dr Hermen Shastri, Azzat Kamaludin, Yash Ghai, Ramlan Surbakti and Mavis Puthuchery. The Malaysian Insider pic by Afif Abd Halim, September 18, 2013. The Bersih People's Tribunal panel members - (from left) Dr Hermen Shastri, Azzat Kamaludin, Yash Ghai, Ramlan Surbakti and Mavis Puthuchery. The Malaysian Insider pic by Afif Abd Halim, September 18, 2013. The presiding panel members of the Bersih People's Tribunal are Yash Pal Ghai, an expert in constitutional law and Head of the Constitution Advisory Support Unit of the UN Development Programme in Nepal, Ramlan Surbakti (former deputy chairman of the Indonesian Election Commission), Kraisak Choonhavan (president of the Asean Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus, a former Senator and deputy leader of the Democrat Party of Thailand).

The Malaysian panellists are lawyer and former administrative and diplomatic officer with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Datuk Azzat Kamaludin, Dr Mavis Puthuchery (former associate professor from the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya) and Rev Dr Hermen Shastri (general secretary of the Council of Churches of Malaysia).

Professor Gurdial Singh, a prominent law professor at the University of Malaya and Director

of the Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity Law, is heading the legal team. - September 18, 2013.

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