

Stop mocking democracy, EC told

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PETALING JAYA: The Election Commission (EC) will retain its image as a mocker of democracy if it does not take account of public feedback in the coming re-delineation of electoral boundaries, says election watchdog Bersih.

Speaking to FMT, Bersih chief Maria Chin Abdullah alleged that the commission had a record of always disregarding objections from the public in its delineation exercises.

She proposed that it changes its procedure by formally consulting the public prior to the next exercise.

“Democratically speaking, the EC needs to engage with the public before deciding on redrawing the boundaries,” she said.

Chin also spoke about Bersih’s effort to educate citizens on their role in the delineation process through its recently formed Delineation Action and Research Team (Dart).

She said Dart would set up subsidiary teams in various constituencies across the nation and each of these teams would mobilise at least 100 citizens to register objections in cases where gerrymandering was evident.

At the same time, she added, Dart would tour the country to explain the delineation process and the public’s role in rejecting gerrymandering.

“We are trying to create awareness on how the cheating has happened all these years and we want to tell the people if they don’t participate the election results are going to be the same again,” she said.

“Bersih doesn’t have the confidence that EC is going to do it right and we want to get the participation of the people.”

The law allows for a 30-day period for voters to register objections after the EC releases a new electoral map.

Chin also commented on the case of Major Zaidi Ahmad, who is facing a court-martial for reporting flaws in the use of indelible ink in last May’s general election.

“Even the EC has admitted the mistake; so why prosecute Major Zaidi?” she said. “The EC has to answer this and (Prime Minister) Najib has to say something about it. Where is the fairness?”

After casting his ballot in the last general election, Major Zaidi lodged a police report claiming that the ink applied to his finger had come off easily.

He has now been charged in a military court on four counts of violating Malaysian Armed Forces Council orders.

His trial is scheduled for April 8 to 10.

Chin also reiterated Bersih's demand on PKR to explain to the public why it had decided to cause a by-election in Kajang.

She said the party owed it to taxpayers to explain the move.

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