

**Greater Racial Polarisation Should Local Government Elections Mandated - Abdul Rahman  
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KOTA KINABALU, Jan 24 (Bernama) -- Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan believes there is a risk of greater racial polarisation should local government elections be mandated.

He said it was a fact that Malaysians were still largely voting based on their racial background and this would be evident in local government elections and in both urban and rural settings.

"I hope DAP can learn from history and understand the complexities. Local government elections may lead to higher local taxes as the elected officials have more autonomy and exercise their power," he said in a statement, here, today.

Abdul Rahman was responding to DAP's push for the restoration of local government election in Penang.

He said that appointing, instead of electing, local government councillors had several advantages, including the ability of the state governments to replace ineffective officers immediately which otherwise could only be done in the next election.

The other advantage of the present local government system, said Abdul Rahman, was seamless administration of both state and local governments that would effectively and quickly handle serious issues such as natural calamities.

"In certain countries, a declaration of emergency by the federal government is needed before federal government assistance can be extended to the local government areas of authority and this leads to delay and slow response to disasters," he added.

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