

People's voice to be taken into account in ratification of six human rights treaties

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- The ratification of the six human rights treaties will be considered in accordance with the Federal Constitution, the nation's ethnic and religious diversity and taking into account the voice of the people especially in sensitive issues, the Dewan Rakyat was told today.

Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Marzuki Yahya said the ratification of the United Nations Human Rights Conventions, which is being scrutinised by the government, would also take into account the compatibility of the conventions in respect to the legal system in Malaysia.

"The ratification process will vary depending on factors such as the conformity of the convention with the Malaysian legal system and the need to have a comprehensive discussion with stakeholders for each convention of human rights.

"A technical committee has been set up to study Malaysia's participation, the committee is chaired by leading agencies that usually draft and supervise the policies of the convention," he told the sitting today.

He was responding to a supplementary question from Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man (PAS-Kubang Kerian) requesting clarification whether the ministry had agreed to ratify the six human rights resolutions and whether the opposition would also be involved in the ratification process of the treaties

In July, Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah promised to try to ratify six international human rights conventions that have yet to be signed, namely the International Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Other unratified conventions are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and

Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;

Commenting further, Marzuki said the Pakatan Harapan government had taken a different approach compared to the old administration over the ratification of the treaties.

“This ratification is seen as the finish line and not a border that cannot be approached and what is important is this needs an open discussion by all parties and not a closed dialogue by certain parties only.

“Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has emphasised at the UN Conference that we give time to all parties to debate this ratification to be decided on the basis of democracy, the government will also carry out this process in full respect for the Federal constitution, religious and racial diversity in Malaysia and by adhering to the voices of the people on sensitive issues,” he said.

Earlier, when replying to Chang Lih Kang's question (PH-Tanjong Malim) Marzuki said the government had not set a specific time frame to decide on the ratification of the six treaties.

“It is more dependent on needs, so we will not set the time and when and where we are going to sign the ratification” he said.

According to Marzuki, a study on the participation of Malaysia in the international human rights instruments was actively being carried out by the Technical Working Group set up under the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the Agency on Human Rights Issues.

"For the purpose of studying the ratification of the six international human rights conventions, the government has set up six Technical Sub-Committees headed by ministries or agencies such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Human Resources; National Unity and Integration Department as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under their jurisdiction with regard to the essence of the international human rights conventions," he said.

He said a series of meetings between government agencies were held to ensure that existing provisions in the international conventions were compatible and not contrary to existing domestic

laws as well as regular discussions involving communities and non-governmental organisations.

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