

## **After Sabah poll, Kuasa pushes for preferential voting system**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 — Parliament should consider adopting preferential voting to replace the first-past-the-post system used now, democratic rights group Kuasa said today.

Kuasa chairman Praba Ganesan pushed for the alternative voting system after observing how almost half of the seats won in the recent Sabah State elections were decided by simple majority of ballots received and not through absolute majorities.

As an example, Praba pointed out how Harun Durabi from Barisan Nasional managed to secure the Bengkoka seat in the recent elections, but only managed 32 per cent or less than a third of the votes cast.

Praba said that compared to FPTP, preferential voting will allow voters to cast their vote for candidates while also stating their alternative choice according to preference in numerical order.

“Voters rank contesting candidates numerically, and if their number one pick does not win their vote is transferred to the second choice.

“By doing so, voters are ordering their preference, and elections have winners who command the highest preference of the constituents.

“Preferential voting as opposed to the anachronistic first past the post, seeks to identify the will of the voters by measuring their preference, when there is no absolute majority winner,” Praba wrote in a statement today.

Praba said such a system is necessary to allow proper participative democracy and for voters to state their preferred candidates, especially since more political parties are being formed.

“We must ensure the majority of voters are getting their preferred representative,” he wrote.

A breakdown of votes casted over the weekend in Sabah, provided by My Kuasa, showed that despite losing the elections, the Warisan Plus coalition received 43.45 per cent of the votes and secured only 32 seats.

Numbers provided showed that winning coalition Gabungan Rakyat Sabah managed to secure 38 seats even after managing a marginally lower vote count of 43.25 per cent from total votes.

“Kuasa advocates this and welcomes other groups to join us in ensuring the system captures the intention of voters, as in to recognise the voters’ preferences rather than be compromised by the need to strategically vote,” he wrote.

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