

## **Whoever The PM Is, Malaysia Needs A "Stability Package" To Fix Party Politics**

In response to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's claim that he has got the parliamentary majority to form a new government, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0) stresses that whoever is the Prime Minister and whichever parties form the government, Malaysia badly needs a "stability package" to fix party politics.

Whether if it is Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who emerges victoriously or Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who survives the counter coup, the Prime Minister is duty bound to put a stop to constant changes of government due to party-hopping by elected representatives. Even a snap poll is unlikely to restore stability since a hung parliament will very likely be a new normal in Malaysian politics.

To restore political stability, the government must be given the space to govern and the opposition must be given the room to scrutinize and compete with the government.

This requires a "stability package" which must contain at least four immediate steps within the next six months:

1. Introduction of recall elections at both the federal and state level to allow a constituency's voters the opportunity to either sack or affirm their elected representative who party-hopped. If their representative is sacked, a by-election will be held;

2. Parliamentary reform to allow opposition lawmakers and government backbenchers meaningful roles in scrutinising government and offering alternatives, so that they do not crave to be ministers or deputy ministers at all costs;

3. Political funding reform which:

a) Guarantees all lawmakers equal constituency allocation regardless of their party/coalition affiliation;

b) Provides public funding for parties based on their vote share, and;

c) Prohibits abuse of statutory bodies and government-linked companies to induce defection of lawmakers or reward government supporters.

4.. Creating an independent office for public prosecution from the Attorney-General's Chambers to end selective prosecution or immunity from prosecution.

The "stability package" should also includes two medium-term measures to be completed before the end of the 14th Parliament:

5. A Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to study how political parties can be strengthened, democratized and professionalised, the scope of which should cover electoral system change, candidacy selection mechanism for parties, and other aspects of intra-party democracy.

6. A Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to study a reconfiguration of our federal system to ensure not just full materialisation of promises in the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) but also rational redistribution of power between three-tiers of governments: federal, state/federal territory, and municipality/district in West Malaysia and divisions in East Malaysia.

This pragmatic reform package has been initially advocated by Bersih 2.0, Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM) and Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) on 10th June 2020 (1).

As stated above, a snap poll is unlikely to ensure stability. Bersih 2.0 further reminds Malaysians that the threat of a Covid-19 resurgence is very real and holding a general election now could reinforce this threat. We should also consider the fact that a snap poll before next July will unnecessarily exclude almost 8 million new voters – including 4 million young voters between the age of 18 to 21. These could only enter the electoral roll when automatic voter registration is implemented.

Given the dubious benefits of a snap poll against its obvious costs, Bersih 2.0 calls upon the Prime Minister of the day to boldly seek inter-party consensus to implement the “stability package”.

**Statement issued by:**

**The Steering Committee of Bersih 2.0**

(1) <http://www.bersih.org/press-statement-from-bersih-2-0-gbm-and-abim-10-june-2020-a-6-point-multi-party-deal-to-reconfigure-politics-and-end-endless-machinations/>

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