

Press Release BERSIH(4 March 2023):

After 100 days, BERSIH urges the Unity Government for More Institutional Reforms

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (BERSIH) congratulates the Unity Government for some of the institutional reforms carried out in its first 100 days and urges for more as per promises by the respective coalitions and parties in the government.

Our Cheers

We congratulate Dewan Rakyat Speaker YB Dato' Johari Abdul and Minister of Law and Institutional Reforms, YB Dato Seri Azalina Othman, for the following initiatives/steps related to Parliament and the Attorney-General's Chambers.

1. The Prime Minister Question (PMQ) Time at the Dewan Rakyat.
2. The increase of the number of motions, from two to four, in the Special Chamber.
3. The initial discussion between the Minister of Law and Institutional Reforms and the Solicitor-General on the separation of Public Prosecution Office from AGC and the setting up of an independent law commission.

Our Disappointments

However, we regret that the Government has missed the opportunities to deliver other low-lying fruits:

1. Continuing the allocation of Constituency Development Funds to the opposition MPs (93% of the Opposition MPs were covered in 2022) despite promised in both manifestos of Pakatan Harapan and Barisan Nasional.
2. No transparency and parliamentary oversight in the appointment of key public officers, including Attorney General, members of the Election Commission and the Public Services Commission
3. No tabling of the Constitutional Amendment bill to effect 10-years tenure limit for the Prime

Minister, an unfulfilled promise of the MOU between the Ismail Sabri Government and PH

4. No tabling of the Political Financing Bill even though this has been worked on by four consecutive governments.

5. No tabling of the Parliamentary Services Bill despite works beginning since the tenure of former Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Ariff Yusof, and another unfulfilled promise of the MOU between the Ismail Sabri Government and PH

6. No repeal or review by parliamentary committee of Sedition Act 1948, Official Secrets Act 1972, Communication and Multimedia Act 1998, Printing Press and Publication Act 1984, Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA).

7. No setting up of Parliamentary Committees more than two months after the 15th Parliament was sworn in.

Our calls for the next 100 days

We urge the Government and Parliament to take efforts to deliver the three following reforms in the next 100 days, which may require Dewan Rakyat to have more sitting days than what are currently scheduled,

1. Setting up of Parliamentary Special Select Committees (PSSCs) and Parliamentary Permanent Select Committees (PPSCs) including one on Elections and Multiparty Democracy

2. A parliamentary act to provide for equitable Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for all parliamentarians

3. Recognition and empowerment of Perikatan Nasional's (PN) Shadow Cabinet with allowance, research officers and information access

Our calls within 1 year

We urge the Government and Parliament to take efforts to deliver the seven following reforms before 24 November 2023, which may require Dewan Rakyat to have more sitting days than what are currently scheduled,

1. Enactment of the Parliamentary Services Act

2. Enactment of a Political Financing Act

3. Enactment on the Amendment to the Election Offences Act

4. Constitutional Amendment to effect 10-years tenure limit for the Prime Minister.

5. Separation of the role of the Attorney General and the Public Prosecutor

6. Transparency and parliamentary oversight in the appointment of key public officers

7. Review by parliamentary committee of Sedition Act 1948, Official Secrets Act 1972, Communication and Multimedia Act 1998, Printing Press and Publication Act 1984, Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA).

BERSIH will continue to engage with the Government, Parliament and the relevant stakeholders to advocate for the reforms, as well as to monitor and check and balance the progress.

Steering Committee of Bersih