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"UUM : UNIVERSITI PENGURUSAN TERKEMUKA"
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RESTORE ELECTION PROCESS AND SYSTEM FOR THE SUCCESS OF DEMOCRACY



UUM ONLINE: "If you want true democracy, the system and election process must be correct," said Chairman of the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC), Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman at a public lecture entitled, Restoration of System and Election Laws in Malaysia. The public lecture was held at the Auditorium, School of International Studies (SOIS) yesterday.

According to the former Chairman of the Election Commission (EC), the Malaysian electoral system was incomplete in which the national election law was seen as being only 30 per cent

democratic, 60 per cent 'missing' and 10 per cent was of made up of items that should not be included but was included anyway and vice versa.

He said the laws in use at the moment have long existed since the era of independence and they have never been reviewed or restructured, except for small changes done in the procedure.

"The election system is the cornerstone of democracy in which if it fails, then democracy is also considered to have failed and I have long awaited for this moment that is for the government to reform the institution where all democratic institutions such as the Election Commission (EC) will be reviewed in depth.

"Hence, the ERC is set up to submit conclusive reports along with suggestions made on improvements to the system and election law within two years. And through research done in several developed countries such as Australia, the United States and European countries, variations in terms of election affairs have been found," he said.

Tan Sri Abdul Rashid said there were 15 reforms to be reviewed by ERC which comprised the electoral system, election management body, election delimitation, voter registration, registration of political parties, election campaigns, political funding, media freedom, election progress, candidate and party's code of ethics in election, election observers, election law enforcement, administration of a caretaker government, cooperation with agencies and voter education.

Being the first on the reform agenda, ERC would ensure that a review of the appropriate electoral systems would be carried out as improvement to the existing 'first-past-the-post' (FPTP) system. Considerations would be made to convert the system to another election system for example Modified First-Past the Post, Proportional Representation, Mix Proportional Representation and other existing systems.

Among the other improvements on the agenda included conducting a review of the electoral management body comprising the powers that must exist primarily in terms of enforcement, ensuring a suitable legal framework for the implementation of delineation duties of the constituencies, ensuring the voter registration method including the eligibility of becoming a voter and the best method of providing immaculate and flawless electoral roll of international standards, establishing a legal framework for registering and regulating political parties and bodies or parties eligible to participate in the election and establishing a legal framework for creating mechanisms for campaigning, campaign control and code of ethics that must exist in the elections.

Reviewing monetary and election expenditures, establishing legal frameworks to control freedom of speech and role and access to public and private media, ensuring legal framework and improvement process on the election progress, creating the Code of Conduct or the guidelines for the conduct of political parties and candidates during the election season, establishing a legal framework covering the affairs of the election observers and empowering the grey area of the election were also discussed.

Tan Sri Abdul Rashid also described the improvements on the reform agenda such as establishing a legal framework relating to the rules and procedures of the establishment of a provisional government after the dissolution of Parliament and / or State Legislative Assemblies, establishing guidelines on co-operation and inter-agency communication during election progress to ensure smooth election process and empowering civic education and electoral education to ensure the voters' level of thought and information on the concept of democracy, the importance of exercising rights as voters, and knowing the process of election progress.

He also added that the ERC was prepared to hold a nationwide tour and meet the community as their involvement was crucial before any decision could be made.

"Political life is the most challenging, uncertain of direction and has no direction, in fact I myself do not see clearly the future of my political career which might end," he said. The lecture ended after a question and answer session.



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