

TIME TO REBUILD THE NATION

On this 57th anniversary of the formation of Malaysia, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0) calls on all Malaysians, including our political leaders, to seize this moment of unprecedented economic, political and social challenges, to go beyond restoring our nation to pre-COVID19 status but to think and dream boldly to rebuild our nation so that we would emerge stronger and better placed to play our part on the global stage.

Three months into 2020, Malaysia witnessed two cataclysmic events that happened almost simultaneously, the global COVID-19 pandemic and the political coup that toppled a democratically elected government. The ripples of these events are still wrecking economic distress and political chaos on us with no end in sight.

At a time when political will and leadership is needed to salvage our economy and restore hope and confidence, we are served with more political machinations and power struggles, resulting in collapses of state governments, talk of counter coups, snap general election and now, the Sabah State Election.

Bersih 2.0 calls on Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to prioritise the interests of Malaysia above partisan politics and negotiate an interparty agreement with his opponents to restore political

stability by reforming some key institutions and laws whose weaknesses are the root causes of the never-ending machinations. Bersih 2.0 had jointly issued a statement (1) with Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM) and Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) on 10th June 2020 detailing these key reforms.

To achieve these reforms, political leadership from all parties are needed as constitutional amendments may be required. Bersih 2.0 urges bipartisanship so that our key institutions can be strengthened and confidence in our democracy restored.

In summary, they are:

(1) Equality before the law by ending selective prosecution or immunity from prosecution by reforming both the Judiciary and Attorney-General Chamber. The rule of law must not only be upheld but seen to be upheld.

(2) Constructive roles for Opposition and government backbenchers by recognising the Opposition's shadow cabinet and allowing Parliamentary Select Committees to play an effective role as a check and balance to the Executive.

(3) Comprehensive political financing reform by disallowing elected representatives from holding positions in GLCs, provide public funding of political parties and equal allocation for all elected representatives.

(4) Deterring crossovers of elected representatives by enacting a recall election law that would empower voters to sack or reaffirm their own representatives if they defect.

(5) Reviewing the Federal-State-Local division of power based on but not limited to the terms and spirit of the Malaysia Agreement 1963 so that all states and federal territories will have powers commensurate to their historical positions in the Federation of Malaysia.

(6) Reform of electoral and representative politics to promote healthy multi-party politics. This would cover electoral system, delimitation, intra-party democracy, candidacy selection, voter registration, conduct of election and media access.

Without these reforms, political instability will be the new norm and the hope of rebuilding Malaysia's devastated economy and restoring the people's confidence in our political system and democracy will be made even more difficult than it already is.

As we reflect on 57 years of nationhood, Malaysians of all ethnicity, creed and social backgrounds must stand resolute against all forces that would seek to divide us and actively find common grounds to build this nation of ours. No nation divided against itself can withstand the many common challenges we are burdened with.

Bersih 2.0 wishes all Malaysians a happy Malaysia Day, we stand in solidarity with all those who are adversely impacted by the economic downturn and whose full rights are still denied.

Statement issued by:

The Steering Committee of Bersih 2.0

(1) <https://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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