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### **Tindak Malaysia Issues Three Appeals for Postal Vote Reform**

Tindak Malaysia, an electoral reform NGO, calls all Malaysian voters, especially those from six states facing state elections (Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pulau Pinang, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan), to appeal to Election Commission (EC), State Legislative Assemblypersons (SLA) and Members of Parliament (MP) for three major postal vote reforms for this state elections.

We commend the past efforts of our EC for expanding voter base for postal voters since GE14 for state elections and 15<sup>th</sup> General Elections which included overseas Malaysians. We acknowledge EC has made great effort in producing materials to educate voters on what to do with postal vote. However, the 15<sup>th</sup> General Elections exposed serious deficiencies in EC in handling the greater postal voting base.

Though postal vote share out of total votes issued are small, the expansion of postal voting rights to include overseas Malaysians and Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) workers resulted in [jump of postal](#) vote share. With the exception of odd constituencies that had significant military presence (e.g., Bera, Jeli), urban seats like Subang, Petaling Jaya, Damansara and Bukit Bendera witnessed a growth in postal vote share from 0 to lower 1% (in GE14) to 1 to over 2% (in GE15). As matter of fact, the top two parliamentary constituencies with highest numerical growth for number of postal vote ballots issued (when compared to GE14) was Subang and Damansara (constituencies without major police or military presence). Among the top ten parliamentary constituencies (for GE15) with highest growth of postal ballot issued, seven of them are large urban seats without significant military or police voting blocs. With a short notice of GE15 announcement on new classes of postal voters, short campaign period and other factors, both domestic (some polling staff recruited after postal vote deadline) and overseas Malaysian postal voters had great difficulty in exercising this right.

In light of the GE15 experience, we have studied our 2018 postal vote reform proposal, consulted our own volunteers and submitted an updated postal vote reform for EC in May 2023. While regulation amendment is not advisable for the state elections, we have determined three areas that EC can exercise their powers effectively to strengthen postal voting process immediately.

Our three appeals to EC, SLAs and MPs are:

1. Immediate declaration of the overseas Malaysians of the six states as postal voters from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023. For GE15, our research found that EC classed overseas Malaysians as postal voters few days before the dissolution of 14<sup>th</sup> Parliament. This is within the powers granted to EC through the Elections (Postal Voting) Regulations 2003. Early declaration of overseas Malaysians as eligible postal voters will prevent online registration crashes and give more opportunities for Malaysians to choose this form of voting right.

2. Extend the campaign period up to 28 days (from nomination to final polling day). EC has been granted powers via Elections (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981 to determine date of nomination and date of polling. This extended period will allow the postal votes to arrive at the hands of eligible Malaysian postal voters and provide sufficient time for the ballots to be returned to Malaysia. While some argue the long campaign period can be tiring, there is no obligation for the candidate to start the campaign immediately after nominations.
3. Have closer cooperation with Wisma Putra, Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates in postal voting process. Close collaborations with these institutions is to facilitate the movements of postal votes and ensure ballots arrive on time in the respective constituencies. Since there will be a potential of 245 State Constituencies facing elections, it would be unreasonable for Malaysian voters and volunteer groups to bear the burden of ensuring the ballots arriving safely at the right Returning Officer's office.

Tindak Malaysia would like to reiterate all Malaysian voters, particularly in the six states facing state elections, to push through these straightforward appeals through their elected representatives. Tindak Malaysia will advocate these appeals in time to come with hashtag #UndiPosBaik and encourage all Malaysians to read Tindak's proposal for [postal vote reform](#). Tindak Malaysia appeals to all Malaysians to disseminate Tindak's postal vote reform with the hashtag #UndiPosBaik. Tindak Malaysia aspires our EC to restore its public confidence with drastic improvements on the postal vote process for the coming state elections.

Postal Vote Reform Proposal by Tindak Malaysia: <https://www.tindakmalaysia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Cadangan-Pembaharuan-Undi-Pos-Tindak-Malaysia-versi-23052023.pdf>

Postal Vote Data of GE14 and GE15: <https://github.com/TindakMalaysia/General-Election-Data/blob/master/Postal%20Vote%20Data%20for%20GE14%20and%20GE15.csv>

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