

Political ceasefire necessary for public safety: Analyst

KUALA LUMPUR: A political ceasefire at a time the country is facing an acid test due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been deemed necessary as it involves the safety of the people, said political analyst Assoc Prof Dr Mohd Izani Mohd Zain.

According to the Universiti Putra Malaysia Faculty of Human Ecology lecturer, the move made by Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in declaring a political ceasefire last Wednesday had been well received by other political parties, who also wanted public interest to be focused on.

"I believe that even if the ceasefire takes place, the political parties will not stop politicking because this is the time they can plan their political strategies for the future.

"Our politics is Covid-19 resistant, politicians will still want to fight for their interests in the name of democracy," he said as a guest on Bernama TV's Ruang Bicara programme that discussed on the political ceasefire.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) deputy director Assoc Prof Dr Kartini Aboo Talib @ Khalid echoed his views and stressed that the agenda to empower the people needed to be translated in the form of responsibility by politicians.

She said it should be the main focus of all elected representatives as opposed to their agenda to defend the status quo, to become prime minister, or even to get ministerial posts.

"Covid-19 is a serious security threat. Rationally, a political truce can happen if all parties agree that matters related to power and status be put aside first because the major problem now is the spread of the pandemic," she said.

Ahmad Zahid had previously stated that UMNO would hold a political ceasefire to support the efforts being implemented by the Perikatan Nasional government to

help the people and country face the pandemic as well as the economic downturn.

According to Ahmad Zahid, all party leaders holding Cabinet posts had been instructed to focus fully on efforts to take care of the people's welfare and ease their burden following the economic impact of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, commenting on the issue of emergency that has sparked speculations among many, Kartini said a state of emergency could be declared in a situation where the country faces a security threat, namely Covid-19, based on Article 150 of the Federal Constitution.

However, measures to implement an emergency must also be the last resort to prevent an election in the near future, she said.

"If we look at the current situation in the country, which is now fighting the pandemic, an emergency can be implemented because it involves security threat and the proclamation can only be made if the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah) agrees to it," she said.

Article 150 of the Federal Constitution states that the King can declare a state of emergency if security, economic life or public order is threatened.

For those who think that an emergency, if it happens, will rob them of their freedom, Mohd Izani feels that the scenario will be a little different because it is more of a 'political emergency' that allows the people to continue with their usual activities.

"I think that if an emergency is declared, it is to prevent an election from taking place earlier.

"All parties must understand, if an election takes place in the near future, it will trigger more Covid-19 infections, thus increasing the number of cases," he said.

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