

---

# Will reform MOU with opposition give the govt legitimacy?

---

Updated 1 year ago · Published on 15 Sep 2021 7:00AM · 0 Comments

SUBSEQUENT governments formed after Pakatan Harapan have suffered one thing: a lack of legitimacy.

Starting with the Muhyiddin government, the lack of legitimacy has become more evident in the current government made up of a prime minister and cabinet from parties that were rejected by the voters in the 2018 general election.



It is well reported that the government and PH leaders had on September 13 inked a historic memorandum of understanding (MOU) for reform and to restore political stability.

Will the execution of the MOU legitimise the current government? To answer the question, one has to consider the meaning of the word “democracy”.

“Democracy” is a compound Greek word that comprises the word “demos” (meaning “the people”) and “kratos” (meaning “power”). Hence “democracy” means “the power of the people”.

Today, <https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/ober/090704.pdf> democracy. <https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/ober/090704.pdf> is often construed <https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/ober/090704.pdf> as being concerned with a voting rule to determine the will of the majority.

This is also known as the “principle of majority rule”.

Following the theory of democracy, a democratic government is chosen by the majority of the members of Parliament who in turn represent the people’s will.

According to philosopher John Locke, consent of the governed and majority rule are central pillars to all theories of democracy.

Thus, no government is legitimate unless it enjoys the consent of the governed, and that consent cannot be rendered except through majority rule.

The theory of democracy (in particular the concept of “representative democracy”) also imposes a duty on MPs to represent their constituencies rather than their interest (Dawn Oliver, *The Parties and Parliament: Representative or Intra-party Democracy*) at p 103).

MPs are voted into Parliament following what they have represented to voters during elections.

When the MP acts for his own interest instead of the interest of his constituencies, he undermines and demolishes one of the central pillars of democracy. This explains why 10 residents in Gombak, Selangor have filed a lawsuit against their MP for breaching his fiduciary duty and representations to his constituents for being involved in the political manoeuvre, dubbed as the “Sheraton Move”.

By merely executing the MOU, the current government will not regain its legitimacy in any way since it has violated both the pillars of democracy.

The only way this government could regain its legitimacy is by calling for a fresh general election which was reported will be after July 2022. – September 15, 2021.

• *Mark Goh Wah Seng is a senior lecturer at HELP University.*

*\* This is the opinion of the writer or publication and does not necessarily represent the views of The Malaysian Insight. Article may be edited for brevity and clarity.*

Sign up or sign in [here \(https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/login\)](https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/login) to comment.