

MEDIA STATEMENT

IDEAS welcomes proposals on Anti-Party Hopping Law and Limiting the PM's term

Kuala Lumpur, 11 February 2022 - The Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) welcomed proposals made by the Law Minister YB Dato' Sri Dr. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar on the tabling of an Anti-Party Hopping Law (AHL) and limiting the Prime Minister's term. These proposals were presented to MPs and Senators in parliament for their feedback and views.

Given how fractious Malaysia's political dynamics have become, an AHL is a positive step in the short term. IDEAS' Senior Manager of Democracy and Governance Unit Aira Azhari commented, "Although we can understand the need to curb the practice of party-hopping, as it has clearly caused instability in our politics and undermines trust in our democracy, several questions must be raised. Firstly, will the law be construed in such a way that will leave it open to potential abuse by party leaders who want to eliminate their rivals within the party? Secondly, what will the implications of an AHL be on freedom of association as guaranteed by Article 10 of the Federal Constitution? These questions must be addressed before the law comes into force, and most importantly, civil society should be engaged and consulted with to discuss these matters. In the long term, the government should consider a recall election mechanism as well. Not all politicians who switch parties do it for the wrong reasons, and the decision should ultimately be returned to their constituents."

"As for the proposal to limit the term of office for the Prime Minister, we believe this is a positive move which will avoid the potential of abuse of power by any individual who holds the office and to curb the excessive concentration of power in the office of the Prime Minister, which has been a stumbling block to a healthy democracy in Malaysia. Once again, we remind the government that civil society must also be included in the deliberation process for this proposal."

With proposals as important as AHL and limiting the PM's term, it is crucial that consultations with a broad spectrum of society are conducted consistently and transparently. These proposals will have wide-ranging implications for the health and maturity of our democracy, which justifies extra scrutiny from civil society and other members of the public.

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About IDEAS

The Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) is a nonprofit research institute, dedicated to promoting solutions to public policy challenges, focussing on three overarching missions – advancing a competitive economy, ensuring trust in institutions and promoting an inclusive Malaysia. IDEAS is Malaysia's first independent think tank, free of personal interests and partisan influences. For more information, visit www.ideas.org.my.

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