



Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL Foundation)

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For Immediate Release

People of Malaysia Mark Historic Elections; ANFREL Calls on New Government to Strengthen Electoral Democracy

Bangkok, 10 May 2018 – The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) congratulates the people of Malaysia for actively participating in the country's 14th general elections. It is commendable that the Malaysian people were able to overcome all obstacles that could have prevented them from exercising their democratic right to vote.

Civil society organizations, citizens' groups, and polling and counting agents (PACA) were instrumental in making sure that every voter's choice was counted, and vigilance by ordinary citizens played a significant role in deterring potential acts of fraud on election day.

ANFREL also congratulates all winning candidates and urges them to work cooperatively to advance the people's interests as they lead Malaysia in a new political era. The candidates who conceded defeat should be lauded for respecting the will of the people, and we appeal to all losing candidates to respect the rule of law by directing complaints, if any, to the proper channels for election dispute resolution.

This election will result in a significant political transition, for it marks the end of more than 60 years of rule by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which has held power since the country gained its independence from Great Britain in 1957. ANFREL urges all concerned parties to respect the sovereign will of the people and allow the transition of power to occur peacefully and in accordance with Malaysian law.

Notwithstanding the fact that the results seem to fairly reflect the will of the voters, ANFREL remains concerned about several electoral issues that have, over time, adversely affected the integrity of Malaysia's electoral process. To rectify such problems, ANFREL calls on the new government to engage with voters and civil society to work on much-needed electoral and institutional reforms. For its part, ANFREL remains committed to working with all stakeholders in Malaysia to strengthen the country's electoral democracy.

Because it is ultimately the people of Malaysia who determine the legitimacy of the election results, it is crucial that the election commission and all concerned government agencies remain transparent throughout the process of complaints adjudication in the post-election period and ensure that all complaints are resolved in a fair and timely manner and all offenders penalized in accordance with applicable law.

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For questions or comments, you may contact Chandanie Watawala at chandanie@anfrel.org, or Kristina Uy Gadaingan at kristina@anfrel.org

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) is a leading regional network in Asia working on the promotion of democratic elections. Formed in 1997, ANFREL was organized as a solidarity movement working to advance the cause of free and fair elections. At present, it has 26 members from 16 Asian countries. As part of its overall mission of supporting democratization efforts in Asia, ANFREL focuses its work on three major areas: election observation, capacity building, and campaign and advocacy. It takes a holistic approach to achieve its mission, and these programs are designed to complement one another in supporting the advancement of free and fair elections across Asia.