

# Academician lauds High Court decision

By **Tania Lam** - September 4, 2021



*Ammar Redza*

**KUCHING:** An academician has lauded the Kuching High Court ruling in allowing a judicial review application filed by five Sarawakian youth against the federal government's decision to delay the implementation of the lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 years.

"This decision by the High Court should be respected and the current government should hasten any action needed to execute the implementation of the constitutional amendments," said Faculty of Language and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) academician, Dr Ammar Redza Ahmad Rizal.

He said it was unfair for the nation to lawfully allow youth at the tender age of less than 16 years to participate in the labour market and be taxed and yet not allow them to participate in lawfully and freely electing representatives of their choice.

With the move to lower the voting age from 21 to 18 years, he believed there would be more significant attention given by all political candidates to youth affairs, particularly on issues such as education and employment.

"However, what I can see is there will be more challenges faced by the current political parties to handle the influx of voters towards the current political climate," he said when contacted on Saturday (Sept 4).

"Previously, political parties normally engaged in voters' registration and used it as a measuring stick to gauge their support. This is a common practice by various political parties," he said.

However, now, with automatic registration, Ammar said it was difficult for political parties to gauge support and they would have to work harder either during or outside political campaigns in ensuring that the voters' decisions would favour them.



"Still, this is a positive move and we shall see more rigorous and hardworking MPs and state assemblypersons. Gone are the days where they can just rely on 'white' and 'black' list in each district polling centre in their election strategies," he said.

He pointed out that Malaysia was not alone in allowing those who had reached at least 18 years of age to vote, pointing out that several Commonwealth countries such as India, United Kingdom, Pakistan, and New Zealand had already implemented such laws.

"Moreover, some other countries such as Scotland and Austria have even lowered the minimum age for voting to 16 years. Therefore, this is not an isolated decision and it has been implemented in multiple countries with multiple demographics and backgrounds," he said.

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