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21 March 2018

**Statement of the Progressive Alliance Mission on “Promoting free and fair elections in Malaysia”**

18 – 20 March 2018, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

This is the statement of a seven-member delegation of the Progressive Alliance that has visited Malaysia to assess and demonstrate solidarity in support of democratic processes in the run up to the 2018 General Election.

The delegation attempted but failed to meet the Malaysian Parliamentary Speaker, but was successful in meeting political leaders from several parties, leaders of civic organizations and visited communities in Kuala Lumpur.

The delegation included:

- **Giacomo Filibeck**, Deputy Secretary General, Party of European Socialist (PES)
- **Neena Gill**, Member of European Parliament, Group of Socialists and Democrats (S&D Group)
- **Evin Incir**, International Secretary, Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP)
- **Greg Moran**, Australian Labor International
- **Ana Pirtskhalava**, Secretary General, International Union of Socialist (IUSY)
- **Conny Reuter**, Secretary General, SOLIDAR
- **Rainer Vogt**, Progressive Alliance

We are concerned to learn from reports and discussions with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Nongovernmental Organizations



(NGOs) as well as various institutions, political and community leaders about the following issues:

- 1) Reports of disenfranchisement of opposition supporters through re-delineation and gerrymandering in favour of the ruling party, taking into account anticipated political allegiances and ethnicities. This includes the reported proposal to create 13 “super constituencies” with over 100,000 voters each, mostly in opposition-held, non-Malay areas;
- 2) Concerns over mismanagement of voter records;
- 3) Reported tampering with voter registration;
- 4) Reported inaccessibility of electronic data of the draft supplementary electoral roll;
- 5) Concerns that expansion of postal voter categories may facilitate fraud;
- 6) Reports of infringements on freedom of assembly and association of Malaysian citizens and arrests, charges against and convictions of activists, artists, politicians, and non-affiliated citizens under draconian laws, as well as denial of legal status to opposition political parties;
- 7) Potential negative impact of high inequality and corruption on equal participation in elections;

In light of the above observations, we call on the Malaysian Federal Government to ensure that the Election Commission adheres to due impartiality, there is no gerrymandering or malapportionment of electoral districts and that voter registration takes place in line with international standards. Respecting and upholding the social, human, civic, economic rights and advocacies of CSOs, NGOs, and organized groups goes to the core of free and fair elections; Malaysian citizens need to be able to inform themselves about the general election and respect freedom of assembly, association and expression. It furthermore is vital that inclusive policies upholding the rights of all members of Malaysian society - regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio economic background, age and political affiliation - are institutionalized.



We encourage Malaysian authorities to invite international electoral observation missions to ensure that democratic processes are improved upon and adhered to.

Any democratic elections must be nothing less than an enabling mechanism for its electorate to bring change. In view of the social, political and economic inequalities that are rife in Malaysia, far-reaching and wide-ranging institutional reforms must be front and centre of the next government's agenda to ensure the economic inequalities, systemic flaws of governance, and deficit of democratic rights are addressed for all Malaysians.

We, in the Progressive Alliance, are committed to closely monitoring the situation.

For democracy and social justice, the international community unites!