



CSO Joint Statement
Date: 28 February 2026

All MPs and Senators should support PM 10-Year Tenure Limit

We the undersigned organisations call upon all 222 members of Dewan Rakyat and 58 members of Dewan Negara to vote for the Constitutional Amendment Bill on Article 43 to introduce a 10-year tenure limit for Prime Minister.

The Amendment Bill is Constitutional

We categorically dismiss any misleading claim that the 10-year tenure limit would be unconstitutional on the pretext that it would restrict the choice of Yang di-Pertuan Agong to pick amongst MPs whom he believes have the majority's support.

The amendment to Article 43 is perfectly constitutional because Article 43 allows other restrictions on the eligibility for Prime Minister. The existing Article 43(7) categorically stipulates that "notwithstanding anything in this Article, a person who is a citizen by naturalization or by registration under Article 17 shall not be appointed Prime Minister."

In the same vein, the insertion of Clauses 2A, 4A, 4B, 4C and AD in Article 43 is perfectly constitutional.

The red herring raised stems from either an innocent misreading of Article 43 or a malicious misinterpretation to block a democratizing and stabilizing reform by cynically dragging in the monarchical institution.

Four Benefits to Democracy and Political Stability

We call upon all parliamentarians and senators to vote in favour of the constitutional bill that would bring four major benefits to Malaysia in terms of democratic governance and political stability.

First, it forces generational renewal in national leadership. The frequent turnover of prime ministers would most likely result in younger successors.

Second, it would ‘discipline’ politics by incentivizing Prime Ministers to set clear policy goals and accomplish them within their limited tenure, instead of focusing on winning the next election and acting in short-term calculations. This would be reinforced by enacting a law for a Fixed Term Parliament to discourage early parliamentary dissolution initiated by Prime Minister.

Third, it would reduce concentration of power in one person, which may breed corruption, abuse of power, personality cult and political dynasty.

Fourth, it would reduce political instability due to all-out political struggles between an incumbent with no retirement date and his/her challengers with no succession timetable.

Room for Refinements

We nevertheless urge the Madani Government to allow for finetuning of the Bill during the committee stage. Government’s openness to refinement would remove any need for this bill to be referred to the Parliamentary Special Select Committee (PSSC) on Human Rights, Elections and Institutional Reforms.

While we support the call for the other Constitutional amendment bill on the separation of Attorney General and Public Prosecutor (coverings Articles 42, 132, 138, 145, 145A, 145B and 160) to be referred to the said PSSC, this bill should be passed in this parliamentary sitting without delay provided refinements are permitted.

We call upon the Minister and the parliamentarians to consider these two refinements.

The first refinement concerns the proposed insertion of Article 43 (4D)(b), which allows a Prime Minister whose time is due to serve as the caretaker prime minister after dissolution of Parliament. We agree with the rationale of this clause but would suggest that leniency end when the Parliament reconvenes after election. This means even if the parliament cannot agree on a new prime minister, the caretaker prime minister should be replaced with another caretaker.

We propose for the new Article 43 (4D)(b) to read,

For the purpose of computing the periods amounting in the aggregate to ten years as referred to in Clauses (2A) and (4A)—

(b) any period during which the person performs the functions of Prime Minister following the dissolution of Parliament under Clause (2) of Article 55 *until the day immediately before a Prime Minister is appointed after a general election or the House first meets after a general election, whichever is the earlier*, shall not be taken into account.

The second refinement concerns a likely situation where a Prime Minister who wins two consecutive elections cannot serve two full five-year terms because his/her terms

would start before the new Parliament reconvenes. This creates an unnecessary complication where the time-due Prime Minister would have to dissolve Parliament early or pass the baton several months before parliament auto dissolves. A refinement will make it more compatible when a Fixed Term Parliament Act is introduced in the future, without another constitutional amendment.

We propose a new clause after 4C to read,

If the Prime Minister ceases to hold office as Prime Minister under Clause (4A) on a date within six months of the date Parliament shall, in accordance with Clause (3) of Article 55, stand dissolved, he and the members of the Cabinet who cease to hold office under Clause (4B) shall continue to discharge the functions of their office until a new Prime Minister is appointed after a general election.

A New Norm in Parliamentary Democracies

The 10-Year tenure limit for Prime Minister introduced in Malaysia would be part of a new trend in parliamentary democracies after Botswana (1966), South Africa (1997), Guyana (2000), Belize (2008), Cayman Islands (2009), Thailand (2017) and Bangladesh (2026). Of these, Belize, Cayman Islands and Thailand are constitutional monarchies.

We applaud the vision of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Madani Government and the dedicated groundwork by Law and Institutional Reform Minister Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said and the Legal Affair Bureau (BHEUU) of the Prime Minister's Department in advancing this reform.

Jointly Issued by:

- 1) Project Stability and Accountability for Malaysia (Projek SAMA)
- 2) Coalition for Clean and Fair Election (Bersih)
- 3) Institute For Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS)
- 4) Rasuah Busters
- 5) Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia (IKRAM)
- 6) Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4 Centre)
- 7) Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM)
- 8) Kuala Lumpur & Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH)
- 9) CSO Platform for Reforms