

Only 40% of Malay youth would vote if GE15 is held now, study finds

Only 40% of Malay youth in the country would turn out to vote if the 15th general election (GE15) is held in the near future, research by an independent pollster shows.

Merdeka Center said this was a low percentage as the youth comprise about 58% of the electorate as a whole.

The study, conducted with NGO Sisters in Islam, was carried out from Oct 30, 2021 to Jan 25, 2022. It saw the participation of 1,216 Malay respondents aged 15 to 25 through face-to-face interviews across the country, including in Sabah and Sarawak.

According to demographic data for 2022 from the **statistics department**, a total of 12.2 million people aged 18 to 40 are eligible to vote, with 5.8 million new voters automatically registered after the introduction of Undi 18.

The study also found that only 33% of Malay youth are interested in politics, with trust in government administration at about 69%.

The rest said they had lost interest in the challenges and political issues in the country, with 52% of the belief that the country was on the wrong track.

At a session to present the findings of the study in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Merdeka Center director Ibrahim Suffian said a survey conducted 12 years ago had shown that 66% believed Malaysia was on track to becoming a developed country.

The latest study had contained questions similar to those in the 2010 survey, and covered the same target group.

Merdeka Center also identified some of the challenges faced by the youth in dealing with issues arising after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in terms of the economy and employment.

Ibrahim said the main concern for the group was job security, with 48% worried about losing their current jobs and being unable to find new work.

Other areas of concern included the environment (43%), corruption (40%), an influx of refugees and immigrants (35%) and mental health (30%).

"The views given by the youth in this latest study are driven by their experiences and challenges over the past few years, including the spread of an epidemic, economic uncertainty and political turmoil," Ibrahim said.

"This has affected their confidence about the future and their views of the country's direction."

Ibrahim said many Malay youth were also sceptical of the political process and saw politicians as "transactional" in nature.

Azmil Tayeb of Universiti Sains Malaysia meanwhile said the same trend could be seen among his students who were increasingly losing faith in the political process.

He said they were instead shifting to volunteer work and the organisation of community programmes with the local people.

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