



DEWAN PERHIMPUNAN CHINA KUALA LUMPUR DAN SELANGOR
吉隆坡暨雪蘭莪中華大會堂
The Kuala Lumpur And Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

Joint Press Statement:

Friends from the media, fellow civil society colleagues, good morning.

Today, we, the undersigned, have called this press conference to examine our country's current political situation at this significant moment marking the 8th anniversary of 509, and to announce several upcoming initiatives and actions.

On 9 May 2018, Malaysia's 14th General Election marked the country's first-ever change of federal government since independence. It was not merely a transfer of power between political coalitions, but a defining moment that ushered Malaysia into a new phase of democratic development. The peaceful and orderly transition of power demonstrated that the country was beginning to move beyond a political structure long dominated by a single ruling coalition. It also reflected how years of reform efforts and civic mobilisation had accumulated into a force capable of reshaping the nation's political direction.

However, a change in government does not automatically mean that institutional reform has been achieved. Over the past eight years, Malaysia's political landscape has gone through repeated periods of instability — from the “Sheraton Move” in early 2020 that led to another change of government, to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent Movement Control Orders and state of emergency, and now the emergence of a coalition government era defined by both competition and cooperation among multiple political parties. These developments show that Malaysia remains in a transitional phase of democratic change. While political arrangements may have shifted, the structures of governance and the country's political culture have yet to undergo meaningful reform at the same pace.

No.1, Jalan Maharajalela, 50150 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tel: 03-2274 6645 **Website:** www.klscch.org.my **Email:** secretariat@klscch.org.my

Facebook: www.facebook.com/klscch



DEWAN PERHIMPUNAN CHINA KUALA LUMPUR DAN SELANGOR

吉隆坡暨雪蘭莪中華大會堂

The Kuala Lumpur And Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

What is particularly worrying is that many institutional reforms long demanded by Malaysians still show little clear progress. Whether it concerns the separation of prosecutorial powers, reforms to Parliamentary Select Committees, political financing laws, the independence of public institutions, or stronger checks and balances on executive power, Malaysia has yet to establish a more mature and resilient institutional framework. At the same time, issues involving race and religion continue to be politicised, while patronage politics and cronyism remain deeply embedded within the political system, gradually eroding public confidence in the reform agenda.

What deserves greater attention today is not merely political rivalry but the growing sense of public apathy towards politics and democratic participation. More and more people are losing interest in public affairs, losing trust in politics, and becoming increasingly disillusioned with reform efforts. Public discourse, too, is slowly drifting away from rational debate and becoming more emotionally driven, populist, and fragmented. Complex institutional issues are often reduced to shallow political quarrels. At the same time, discussions on matters of public interest are increasingly shaped by the logic of social media, where sensationalism and instant reactions dominate.

If this trend continues unchecked, it will inflict more serious damage on the country's democratic development.

The greatest threat to democracy has never been the existence of differing opinions, but the gradual withdrawal of citizens from public life. When people become disillusioned and disengage from politics and civic participation, the ones who benefit most are opportunistic politicians who rely on low voter turnout, populist rhetoric, and racial polarisation to preserve their influence and power.



DEWAN PERHIMPUNAN CHINA KUALA LUMPUR DAN SELANGOR
吉隆坡暨雪蘭莪中華大會堂
The Kuala Lumpur And Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

We must be clear that a democratic transition is never completed through a single election. The events of “509” in 2018 merely opened a historic window for reform; they did not guarantee that reform would automatically follow. Ultimately, Malaysia’s future still depends on whether civil society continues to participate, to hold power accountable, and to push for institutional change.

In the current political climate, it is even more important for civil society to rebuild meaningful spaces for public reasoning and discussion. Today, public discourse is increasingly driven by emotional reactions and fragmented information, while deeper conversations about institutional reform and the country’s long-term direction are becoming marginalised. Without rational and substantive public engagement, democracy risks remaining trapped at the level of emotional mobilisation instead of maturing into a stable and healthy democratic culture.

For this reason, we will be organising a public forum in mid-July this year, bringing together academics, commentators, representatives of civil society organisations, and members of the public to discuss the institutional challenges, democratic concerns, and reform priorities currently facing Malaysia.

This forum is not intended to endorse any political party. Rather, it is an effort to bring public attention back to the question of institutional reform itself. At a time when political apathy and social polarisation are becoming increasingly severe, civil society cannot afford to retreat, nor can it lose the resolve to continue pushing for reform.

We will announce further details regarding the forum speakers, venue, and date in due course. We look forward to the continued attention and participation of the public

No.1, Jalan Maharajalela, 50150 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Tel: 03-2274 6645 **Website:** www.klscch.org.my **Email:** secretariat@klscch.org.my

Facebook: www.facebook.com/klscch



DEWAN PERHIMPUNAN CHINA KUALA LUMPUR DAN SELANGOR
吉隆坡暨雪蘭莪中華大會堂
The Kuala Lumpur And Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

On this eighth anniversary of “509”, we call upon all Malaysians not to give up on democratic participation simply because reform has progressed more slowly than many had hoped. Malaysia’s democratic journey may still be filled with setbacks and uncertainties, but only through continued civic participation, consistent scrutiny of those in power, and active engagement in the electoral process can the country avoid slipping backwards politically once again.

We therefore also urge the public to continue voting actively in the coming state elections and the 16th General Election, to safeguard Malaysia’s hard-earned democratic progress through civic action.

Democracy is not merely a slogan that resurfaces during election season, but a long-term national undertaking that demands patience, participation, and public consciousness. Only through the continued involvement of the people can the reform agenda continue to move forward.

Thank you.

Civil society organisations :

1. The Kuala Lumpur And Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH)
2. Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia (IKRAM)
3. BERSIH
4. Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM)