

New reforms committee to restore order

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Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan



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By ALIFAH ZAINUDDIN / Pic By TMR

The newly formed institutional reforms committee has been tasked to study, revise and make recommendations on a number of key legislation and institutions in the country.

The five-member panel has identified several contentious laws and government agencies to be vetted in the next two months before it makes the necessary recommendations to the Council of Eminent Persons in July.

The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia president Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan (*picture*) said one of the priorities of the group will be to repeal some laws and amend the others which are unclear.

“We are looking at some legislation which can be repealed in total, and some which require amendments and this will include all the draconian laws. I don’t have to list them all,” Ambiga, who is a member of the new committee, said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Among the legislation mentioned were the Anti-Fake News Act 2018, the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 and the Sedition Act 1948.

“We will look into all these Acts that have impaired our fundamental liberties unnecessarily,” she said.

The committee has also named the Attorney General’s Chambers, the Election Commission, the Malaysian Anti- Corruption Commission and the police force as institutions it will probe further into within the 60-day assessment period.

One of the early suggestions by the group is to establish a law commission to review legislation on a continuous basis.

“There are no recommendations on that yet, but we are looking at it. In

some countries, the law commission even has the power to initiate legislation, not just submit recommendations," Universiti Malaya Prof Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi said.

The group will hold discussions with other stakeholders and individuals to gather the necessary information.

The institutional reforms committee was formed by the Council of Eminent Persons on Tuesday. The council, which was established to advise the new government on economic and financial matters, said economic reforms "cannot bring the desired change" unless accompanied by institutional reforms.

The committee consists of Datuk KC Vohrah, Ambiga, Shad Saleem, Datuk Mah Weng Kwai and Brigadier General Datuk Mohamed Arshad Raji.

The panel will present its findings and recommendations to the council which will then present the report to Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.