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Public perceptions towards corruption unchanged since 2005

BANGI – A survey carried out by Merdeka Center in collaboration with BFM Radio on the occasion of World Anti-Corruption Day (which falls on 9th December each year) found that 77% of Malaysian voters perceived the prevalence of corruption in the country to be serious. This perception appears unchanged compared to similar polls conducted in August 2005 and June 2012 which found 76% and 78%, respectively saying that corruption was seriously prevalent.

Another line of question which asks whether people perceived if the problem of corruption has increased, decreased or remained unchanged compared to a year ago. The survey found that 49% of Malaysians report that corruption had increased, 20% felt it had remained unchanged while 21% felt it had decreased compared to one year ago.

The same survey also saw a majority, 56% of Malaysians perceiving the government's fight against corruption left much to be desired despite recent successes by the anti-corruption commission. These views were more apparent among younger voters and those with internet access.

Reflecting upon the recently released Auditor General's report, the survey found that Malaysians were split, where 51% felt that the report was not taken seriously while 39% felt otherwise. Again, these views were more prevalent among younger voters.

Perhaps as a silver lining, the survey found that 67% of Malaysians felt that it was possible for ordinary citizens to make a difference in combatting corruption. This sentiment was particularly strong among rural and low income households.

The survey was carried out by the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research between 26th November and 5th December 2014. For this survey, 1,019 registered voters comprising 61% Malay, 30% Chinese and 9% Indian respondents were interviewed by telephone. Respondents were selected on the basis of random stratified sampling along ethnicity, gender and state of residence. The interviews were carried out in the preferred language of the respondents.

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