



News Release

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Strong voter approval rating for Sarawak CM Adenan Satem

BANGI – Sarawak 5th Chief Minister (CM) Tan Sri Adenan Satem has attained strong approval among Sarawak voters ahead of the coming 11th state election schedule for May 7, 2016. 81% of the respondents reported being satisfied with the performance of Chief Minister Adenan Satem as found in a survey among Sarawak voters concluded at the end of January 2016. The Sarawak CM approval rating improved from 74% to 81% when compared to an earlier Merdeka Center survey conducted in April 2015. The positive rating is across all segments of the society including Malay-Melanau, Dayak and Chinese voters.

75% of respondents in the same survey agreed that CM Adenan “had brought significant changes” to Sarawak since he took over as CM in February 2014. When asked about the major changes that CM Adenan brought, 1/3 of the respondents recognized the abolishment of road toll charges at several locations within Sarawak. This was followed by the awareness of more infrastructure projects (18%), addressing the issue of illegal logging (13%) and more welfare assistance for low income citizens (11%). 7% of respondents polled also noted that the CM was “serious in fighting corruption in the state”. 19% of the Chinese respondents recognized the change brought by CM Adenan in the area of education (specifically mentioning the recognition of the UEC by the state government).

The survey also tested voters support for several of the new policies introduced by CM Adenan Satem since February 2014. The survey noted that Sarawak voters had mixed views about some of the policies and actions taken thus far:

Policy	Agree	Disagree	DK/NR
Reiterate English as the official language in Sarawak together with Bahasa Malaysia	83%	12%	4%
Recognise Unified Examinations Certificate (UEC)	68%	11%	21%
Allow Christians to use kalimah Allah	53%	29%	17%
Suspend the construction of Baram dam	47%	23%	30%
Ban some opposition personalities from entering Sarawak	35%	46%	19%
Ban NGO personalities such as those from BERSIH, from entering Sarawak	35%	38%	27%

Moderate Sarawak government rating and mixed views on Sarawak Opposition

In the same survey, 62% of the respondents reported being satisfied with the performance of the Sarawak state government; significantly lower compared to approval rating of CM Adenan Satem. Sarawak state government approval rating decreased 6% when compared to 68% as recorded in April 2015. Sarawak state government has strong approval rating from the Malay-Melanau community (79% satisfied) and follows by Dayak (62%). The Chinese voters are split in their view on Sarawak state government with 49% satisfied and 44% dissatisfied. The dissatisfaction felt of the Sarawak state government also increased from 25% in April 2015 to 33% in January 2016.

The survey also found polarized views among voters on the Opposition in Sarawak. Overall, only 36% of the respondents are satisfied with the performance of the Opposition in the state while is close to half (47%), of the respondents reporting being dissatisfied with the Sarawak opposition. Less than one-third of Bumiputera respondents (Malay-Melanau and Dayak) were satisfied with the Sarawak opposition while close to half of the Chinese respondents satisfied with the Sarawak Opposition. 17% of the respondents refused to comment on the Sarawak Opposition.

When asked about the Sarawak Opposition leaders, more than one-third of the respondents could not provide assessment on state PKR and DAP chiefs, Baru Bian or Chong Chieng Jen, respectively. 31% of the respondents were satisfied with the performance of Baru Bian and 27% dissatisfied but 42% of the respondents were unable or refused to provide responses. The survey found Sarawak PKR chief Baru Bian obtained better ratings among Dayak voters (40% positive vs 27% negative) but more than half of the Chinese respondents did not know him.

On the other hand, DAP Sarawak chief Chong Chieng Jen, attained an overall positive voter rating of 36% with 27% dissatisfied while 37% did not know him. The survey found that Chong achieved a high rating among Chinese voters (62% satisfied) but close to one-half of the Bumiputera respondents did not know him.

Despite the lower satisfaction figures for the Opposition and its leaders, the same survey found that a majority (56%) of respondents agreed that Sarawak needed a stronger opposition in the state assembly. Across the different ethnic groups, the survey found three-quarters of the Chinese respondents want a stronger opposition in the state assembly, followed by 48% of the Dayak and 42% of the Malay-Melanau.

In our opinion, although CM Adenan possessed strong approval rating among voters not all of it will be translated into votes for the BN. In general, the survey indicates that voters do recognize the changes brought by the chief minister but the attribution of the positive outcomes may differ according to voter segments. For example within certain quarters of the Sarawak Chinese electorate, the delivery of policy changes and improvements may be attributed to the effort of opposition parties such as the DAP. Meanwhile Bumiputera voters are likely going to attribute improvements to the BN on account of its continued presence in their communities. Nonetheless

despite the weaker ratings, the survey does show a strong appreciation among Sarawak voters for the Opposition to play a check and balance role in the governance of the state.

The survey was carried out by the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research between the 20th to 26th January 2016 to gauge voters' perceptions of current developments in the Sarawak in the lead up to the state elections. 815 registered voters comprising 27% Muslim Bumiputra, 38% Non-Muslim Bumiputra and 36% Chinese respondents which was reflective of the electoral profile of Sarawak were interviewed via fixed line and mobile telephones. Respondents were selected on the basis of random stratified sampling along age group, ethnicity, gender and state constituency. The poll was funded by Merdeka Center's internal financial resources.

About Merdeka Center for Opinion Research

Merdeka Center for Opinion Research was formally established in 2001 as an independent organization focused on public opinion research and socio-economic analysis. Merdeka's mission is to act as a bridge between ordinary Malaysians and other stakeholders with the leading members of the nation – by collecting public opinion studies and expressing them through survey results, analysis and position papers. For details, visit: www.merdeka.org

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