



## News Release

November 24th 2017

### **Economic issues remain top most voters' concerns**

BANGI – Economic issues, comprising worries over rising cost of living, economic hardship, jobs and other related matters, remained the top most concern voiced by 72% of voters across the country.

Picking up from public discussion on the topic of high cost of living, we undertook a survey between 4th and 14th November to uncover voters' views about how the issue has affected them. The survey found that economic stress indicators showed a slight improvement compared to January 2017. Principal findings on the seven indicators as follows:

- 29% of respondents report that they did not possess a minimum of RM500 of savings to address any emergency, this is slightly improved from 33% in January 2017;
- 64% of respondents felt stressed thinking about the future, compared to 68% in January 2017;
- 40% report delaying or unable to make payments on utility bills such as electricity and telephone bills – a figure that remained unchanged since January;
- 20% report having taken on new debt (in the form of personal loans or charging of credit cards) – this represents a 2% increase compared to January;
- 15% report having encountered new conflict with the family – a 2% increase compared to January 2017;
- 15% report skipping meals in order to make ends meet – a figure that has remained unchanged since January; and
- 11% who report needing to sell or pawn off possessions in order to meet expenses – this figure is 1% higher compared to January 2017.

In our opinion, the survey conveys a picture of a Malaysian electorate that was largely affected by rising costs and feeling some levels of distress in spite of the strong macroeconomic growth numbers. The survey also indicates between one to two out of every ten Malaysians are cutting back on essentials such as food in order to make ends meet.

The survey was carried out by the Merdeka Center for Opinion Research between 4th to 14th November 2017 to gauge voters' perceptions of current developments. 1,203 registered voters comprising 52% Malay, 29% Chinese, 7% Indian, 6% Muslim Bumiputra, 6% Non- Muslim Bumiputra, (from Sabah and Sarawak) which was reflective of national electoral profile 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.

-ends-

**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](http://www.merdeka.org)

Contact: Ibrahim Suffian

Director - Programs

Mobile: 6012 379 1940

Email: [ben@merdeka.org](mailto:ben@merdeka.org)