

should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

4. THE NOMINATIONS

The nomination of candidates marks the beginning of the election process. It triggers some significant election activities. For example, where only one candidate has been nominated in a constituency that person becomes the duly elected representative for that constituency. Where, however, more than one candidate is nominated in a constituency, a poll has to be taken to determine the successful candidate. The nomination process is thus an important attribute of a free and fair election.

It was therefore important that the advance team of the Observer Group should visit some nomination centres selected on a random basis. Two separate observer teams, each accompanied by members of the support staff, visited nomination centres in the Kuala Lumpur area and the other observed centres in Selangor.

The visits to these centres were carried out in accordance with the electoral laws of Malaysia. Regulation 6(5) of the Elections (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981 prohibits the returning officer from permitting into the nomination centre any persons other than the candidates, their proposers and seconders and one other person appointed by each candidate. However, despite this apparent constraint, the Observer Teams were able to visit the vicinity of a number of nomination centres.

Our advance team visited a number of nomination centres in Kuala Lumpur and one neighbouring state. They were impressed by the orderliness of the crowds that supported both the opposition and the ruling party candidates. They were well received by the returning officers who explained the procedures governing the nomination of candidates. In some cases they were permitted to observe the proceedings from vantage points in the immediate vicinity of the nomination hall. From their observations, they concluded that the nomination proceedings they had observed were efficiently conducted. The nomination officers appeared to be competent and carried out their duties efficiently.

While there were some disadvantages in not being able to observe clearly the actual nomination proceedings, the teams formed the view that the venues were well chosen for the convenience and benefit of supporters and the public. They felt that the presence of so many members of the public and supporters seemed to indicate a high degree of public awareness as well as clear political commitment and involvement in the election process. Although they could only visit a few nomination centres, they were of the view that the nomination process was conducted in a free and fair manner.