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Delays by civil servants the subject of most complaints

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Over 60 per cent of the complaints received by the Public Complaints Bureau last year were about government officers' delays in discharging their duties.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, who released the bureau's 1997 annual report today, said he was very disappointed as each government department and agency had a client's charter which they should follow.

"This is important especially now when speedy service can help economic recovery. There is no reason for delays," he said at a Press conference, adding that many officers had been given warnings by their department heads for inordinate delays.

He said departments and agencies which found the time frame set in their charters to be unrealistic should revise them. This would give the public a clear idea of the time frame for the different processes.

Abdul Halim said 3,697 complaints were received last year, compared to 3,847 in 1996. Of this, 66.3 per cent were about delays, compared to 68.1 per cent in 1996.

He said last year 1,385 complaints were investigated and 1,167 were found to be baseless while 1,145 complainants were given advice and clarification.

A total of 932 cases were solved, or 67.3 per cent of the cases investigated. Of these, 731 or 78.4 per cent were settled within the three months stipulated in the bureau's client's charter.

Abdul Halim said the bureau was an important channel for public feedback to improve public service, and was one way to detect excessive red tape which could be reduced.

He said this when asked how the public service would respond to the Prime Minister's call for a revamp to cut red tape which causes delay.

Speaking at the presentation of excellent service awards to the Prime Minister's Department employees last Friday, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said companies could ill-afford delays which will translate into losses.

Abdul Halim said a directive had been sent out to all departments to find ways to speed up processes and to cut down red tape. A reminder was sent out several days ago.

Renewal of driving licences had been speeded up.

On the bureau's report, Abdul Halim said the Home Ministry was the subject of most of the complaints, mainly about the registration and immigration departments.

"By subject, most of the complaints were about land matters," he said.

By State, Selangor received the most complaints - 28 of the total 137. Most complaints against State Governments were about delays in attending to official matters, 35.1 per cent of the total, compared to 54.2 per cent in 1996.

The public can lodge complaints by going to the bureau's branches here, in Penang, Terengganu and Johor. They can also write in or file complaints with officers on circuit. They can e-mail the bureau at [bpa@smpke.jpm.my](mailto:bpa@smpke.jpm.my)

The bureau's homepage is at [bpa.smpke.jpm.my](http://bpa.smpke.jpm.my)

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