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EC: Provide us with the evidence

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Elections Commission today appealed to those with knowledge of existing phantom voters to report the matter immediately.

EC chairman, Datuk Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman, said they could only tackle the phantom voter menace if it had the co-operation of all quarters.

He was commenting on a statement by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday that Umno wanted the voting list in all the parliamentary and State constituencies reviewed as the existing one failed to reflect the actual composition of voters.

Dr Mahathir had said the EC should step in and take immediate measures to address the "scam" as the voters' list in the country had been rigged to accommodate phantom voters.

The Prime Minister was referring to the recent Anak Bukit and Pendang by-elections.

Said Abdul Rashid: "We need the co-operation from all quarters to come and tell us if there are names which should not be where they are.

"If there are phantom voters as claimed, we want them to come to us with the list so that we can investigate... we have the machinery and can track them (alleged phantom voters)."

He said phantom voters were names of voters who have died but had not been struck off the list.

"Even if they are voters from outside, they cannot be stopped from voting because their names are in the electoral roll which made them eligible to vote.

"There are also those who have moved out elsewhere, but did not change their addresses.

"When election was held, they went back to vote. These are genuine voters."

Abdul Rashid said the phantom voter problem would always crop up in elections.

"The problem is when EC displays the electoral roll, nobody bothers to raise objections," he added.

Abdul Rashid said to solve the problem of phantom voters, the EC had introduced a new ruling which made it compulsory for voters to vote only at constituencies according to addresses on their identity cards.

The ruling only applies to those who had registered after July 16.

Previously, those registered to vote in a particular constituency can do so even if they resided elsewhere and their identity cards carried the addresses of their residences.

The move, he added, was part of the measures taken by the EC to address the phantom voter issue and illegal shifting of voters from one area to another.

The system is being imposed under the year-long voter registration exercise launched recently which enable eligible citizens to register throughout the year at any EC or post office nationwide, including via the EC's mobile unit.

Those seeking to register must do so themselves at any EC office or the 639 post offices nationwide.

Group registration by political parties or registration through agents is not allowed under this new system.

Abdul Rashid said the EC formed a special task force about two months

ago to ensure success of the new registration exercise.

He added that the task force, led by EC member Datuk Zainal Abidin Mat Said, was on a nationwide tour to gauge the progress of the exercise and to receive complaints and objections.