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DPM: Investigate the re-registered 2.8 million voters

KLANG, Sun. - The 2.8 million voters believed to be re-registered in certain states over the last 30 years must be investigated by the Election Commission, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"We need the help of the Election Commission and National Registration Department to track down these voters, to ascertain their actual voting constituencies and register them where they belong."

He said there should not be much difficulty in tracking these voters down, as the departments were becoming fully computerised.

Abdullah said there was need for a complete clean-up of the electoral roll.

He was speaking after launching the Skoda car exhibition by Malaysia's main distributor and franchise holder, AutoPraha Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Pantai Bharu Group, here today.

"It's important that voters vote where they are residing, working or according to the address in their identity cards."

He said the Election Commission must put the electoral roll in order to ensure that voting was not tainted by fraud, cheating and phantom votes.

"The issue of phantom voters has been raised many a time during general elections and by-elections, especially with voters being brought in from other constituencies, and this is very unhealthy and needs to be addressed."

Abdullah said the Opposition may be getting "inside help" to transfer voters to win seats. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had yesterday said the same.

Dr Mahathir described this as a big fraud and said Barisan Nasional was studying the action to be taken. Abdullah said Umno would prepare a report on the 2.8 million voters believed to have been transferred to other constituencies, and submit it to the EC for action.

He hoped the clean-up would be done before the next general election.

Meanwhile, Election Commission secretary Datuk Wan Ahmad Omar said the EC would need the assistance of the National Registration Department and political parties to ascertain if 2.8 million names in the electoral roll have been moved with-out their knowledge.

He said it was a mammoth task for the EC to rectify the problem by checking all 2.8 million individuals whose address in the roll was different from the address in their identity cards.

Wan Ahmad said the EC would recommend that political parties lodge reports along with proofs of individuals whose names were listed in areas which they did not have "constructive residence".

"This is a more suitable way for the EC to act on the irregularities. Our job is to make corrections based on reports," he said in Kuala Terengganu today.

Besides, he said the commission did not have enough manpower to verify each of the 2.8 million names.

"If a person was found to have cheated about his residence, the commission will use his name to the constituency where he has actual residence."