

Upko fears 'Sabahans' may want vote on M'sia
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The United PasokMomogun KadazanDusunMurut Organisation (Upko), a member of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN), fears that illegal immigrants in Sabah with MyKads issued via the backdoor - meaning Putrajaya - will one day demand a referendum on the state being in Malaysia.

Upko deputy president Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing (left) expressed his fears on the possible referendum in a statement to the local media yesterday.

"What does the future hold for Sabah if its original citizens are outnumbered by those who have obtained their Malaysian citizenship through dubious means?" asked Bumburing, who is also Tuaran MP, in the statement.

He was explaining the move by Upko to hand over a 122-page memorandum on the issue, 'Memorandum Pembatalan IC Projek Milik Pati Di Sabah' (Cancellation of Project ICs held by Illegal Immigrants in Sabah) to the deputy home minister at Parliament House last week.

The so-called Malaysians demanding a referendum for Sabah to be out of Malaysia, reiterated the Tuaran MP, is "the worst case scenario". He estimates that the children of illegal immigrants in Sabah will total three million in 15 years' time.

Bumburing, elaborating on his statement, makes no bones about the fact that many of the illegal immigrants with MyKads in Sabah are Filipinos. He feels that this must be read against the longstanding Philippines claim to Sabah. He cites the UN referendum in Timor Leste - "ending, in a face-saving gesture, Indonesia's 27-year illegal occupation of the country" - as a case in point.

Hence, according to Bumburing, "the federal government must be careful about this scenario (referendum) as it can happen especially since we are still in doubt about the loyalty of these people - the illegal immigrants - to the country".

"We do not want the situation to become a senjata makan tuan (weapon - MyKad - eating its master - Putrajaya)," he said in implying that the issuance of MyKads to the illegal immigrants could come back one day to haunt the federal government.

'Proof is in the memorandum'

To nip in the bud the hypothetical demand by the Filipinos in Sabah for a referendum, Bumburing wants the National Registration Department (NRD) to nullify all MyKads issued via the backdoor in Sabah to illegal immigrants. The proof, he stressed, was all there in the Upko Memorandum.

He called, as a first step, for the cancellation of the Project ICs also called Project IC Mahathir 1991 to 1994 - held by the illegal immigrants for being in contravention of Section 3, Clause 1, Chapters 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 22 of the federal constitution and Instrumen

(Peraturan Pendaftaran) - Instrument (Registration Regulations) - of the NRD.

According to sources, holders of the Mahathir ICs can vote but cannot leave the state, open bank accounts and the like and therefore the ICs can be easily confiscated.

"The Project ICs are also in contravention of Article 4 of the federal constitution and Points 6 and 10 of the 20 Points Agreement governing Sabah's participation in the Federation of Malaysia," said Bumburing.

The Upko deputy chief, belabouring the memorandum, pointed out that rampant cases of illegal immigrants holding MyKads "is an open secret in Sabah". "We have the illegal immigrants themselves telling us that they will be soon getting their MyKads," he said. "Why should such a situation be allowed to continue?"

He urged the federal government to resolve the issue before the next general election. He recalled that this was a promise made during the last polls in 2008. He noted that the federal government had in the past successfully conducted an exercise, albeit limited, to weed out the MyKads held illegally but the problem has continued and resurfaced.

'The real fixed deposit'

Compounding the problem was the fact that the illegal immigrants were registered as voters in Sabah and had emerged as the "real fixed deposit" of the BN in the state, he said." A former NRD staff member held under the Internal Security Act (ISA) is willing to testify on this."

NONE"The ball is in their court. The federal government must do something to convince the people in Sabah that it has their interests and welfare at heart," said Bumburing. "Failure to resolve the issue would cost the BN the votes of the people who are fed up with the problem."

He pledged that Upko would not remain silent on the issue and vowed "to be vocal about it until the federal government does something concrete to resolve the matter".

Bumburing, tracing the background to the Upko Memorandum, said that he was complying with a demand by Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein on June 10 to show proof that illegal immigrants in Sabah had been issued with the MyKad via the back door. Hishammuddin's demand, as related by Bumburing, follows his efforts in raising the issue in Parliament several times.

Hishammuddin had then confirmed that "no MyKads were issued to illegal immigrants in Sabah". He was partly echoing a statement by the Sabah NRD director on the matter.

The Sabah NRD director had also been quoted as saying then in the local media, that "any suspect MyKads in Sabah should be referred to Putrajaya and not the local office".

The reading is that the MyKads held by illegal immigrants in Sabah were issued by Putrajaya, and not Sabah NRD, without the approval of the state government as per the state and federal constitutions and the Malaysia Agreement of 1963.

