

## **'Dubious' voters may decide GE13**

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ANALYSIS In the first part of this article, I highlighted five problems with the electoral roll which were not addressed in the report by the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on Electoral Reform.

In this second part, I will highlight five additional problems with the electoral roll, all of which concern the highly problematic area of postal voting among army and police personnel.

### 5. Postal voters who are registered using their regular ICs

Army personnel, who are postal voters, have IC addresses beginning with T. Police personnel, who are postal voters, have IC addressing beginning with R, G and I.

If any of these army or police voters were previously registered as voters using their civilian IC numbers, their civilian registration entries should be deleted from the electoral roll.

NONE While this process may have taken place for most of these postal voters, the possibility that these voters appear twice on the electoral roll cannot be discounted. This possibility was not investigated by the PSC on Electoral Reform.

The analysis conducted by Mimos (Malaysian Institute Of Microelectronic Systems) on behalf of the PSC was only restricted to looking for voters who were registered under the same IC number.

Conducting this analysis requires massive amounts of computing power since the name and date of birth of each army and police postal voter has to be matched with the name and date of birth of every single entry in the electoral roll (currently numbering more than 12 million).

Even researchers, political parties and politicians who are interested in investigating the presence of this specific problem in the electoral roll would not have the capacity and know-how to conduct this analysis.

Table 3 below shows two examples of army voters who were also registered as voters using their civilian ICs. The civilian entries were deleted after their inclusion was referred to the Election Commission (EC).

NONE

This problem is not restricted to the presence of one person registering under his or her own civilian IC as well as his or her army/police IC.

It is also possible for the IC of army or police voter to be used by his or her spouse. If this occurs, it would be much harder to detect since it would not be the same name and date of birth registered under two ICs - one army/police and the other civilian.

If the spouse is registered twice, one using his or her own IC, and once using the civilian IC of his or her army/policy spouse, then the same name would appear twice but having to different dates of birth.

Of course, one way to detect this is to check for the mistake in the gender indicated by the IC and the gender of the voter as indicated by the EC records.

The screenshot below shows one such example of a wife who are registered as a voter using the IC number of the husband. The name of the voter is female as is their gender identity in the EC records but her IC number ends with an odd number which indicates that the holder of the IC is male.

When the IC number was inputted into the MyEG (Malaysian E-Government) website, the name of the male postal voters appeared.

After a total of 42 cases were discovered across five parliament seats in Negeri Sembilan (Seremban, Rasah, Telok Kemang, Rembau and Tampin) in Q2 (Quarter 2) of 2011, the EC was obliged to delete these names.

NONE

This was a very time-consuming task since the civilian IC addresses of the postal voters in question had to be 'tracked down' using other databases (since they are not given in the EC website). In this particular instance, the MyEG database was used because NRD (National Registration Department) no longer allows open access to their website to check for the validity of ICs.

If one's wife could be allowed to register using the husband's IC which has a different name, one wonders if another person could register using any police/army postal voter's civilian IC address?

Again, this possibility was not addressed in the PSC report. There are currently more than 200,000 army and police postal voters. To ensure that their civilian ICs are not being used by other people, a thorough investigation needs to be conducted using the civilian IC numbers of these army/police postal voters.

#### 6. Spouses of police who are registered as postal voters

According to section 2 of Elections (Registration of Electors) Regulations 2002, spouses who qualifies to be registered as postal voters are as follows:

- \* Spouse of a serving member of regular naval, military or air force of Malaysia, the Commonwealth or other country;

- \* Spouse of a person in the public service of the Malaysian government or any state/local authority or statutory body who is living with the serving spouse outside the boundaries of Peninsular Malaysia or Sabah or Sarawak;

- \* Spouse of a person engaging in full-time studies at any university, training college or any higher educational institution outside the boundaries of Peninsular Malaysia or Sabah or Sarawak and who is living with the student at the time for application for registration as a parliamentary or state elector.

The spouse of a member of the police force is not eligible to be registered as postal voters.

But in our analysis of the postal voters in the June 2011, we found there were over 4,000 spouses of police voters who were registered as postal voters. Table 4 below shows a sample of spouses of police voters who are also registered as postal voters.

#### 7. Spouses of army/police voters who are of the same gender

In this category, spouses of army/police who are of the same gender - i.e. same sex marriages - were identified.

For example, in the Setiawangsa June 2011 electoral roll, Harisah binti Ab Ghani (IC: 770130035668) was listed being married to Zaini binti Hamzah (IC: T1110543).

When Zaini binti Hamzah's IC was searched in the EC website, it was found that she had now become Zain bin Hamzah/Lelaki and had been shifted to the Ketereh parliamentary constituency in Kelantan.

In the most recent check, Zain was switched back to Zaini binti Hamzah. Both Zaini and Harisah's current

voting constituency is unknown as both are listed as being 'processed' in the EC website.

#### 8. Army and police voters who are above the retirement age

According to the army's website, the retirement age for army personnel is 55 (maximum). For certain grades, it is lower than 55. For other civil servants, the mandatory retirement age is 58.

A limited search of the June 2011 electoral roll revealed over 44 names of police postal voters who were above the age of 58.

For example, Wan Rasidy bin Roni (IC: RF151304), born on Nov 19, 1900, which makes him 112 this year, is registered in Balai Polis Lumut in the Lumut parliamentary constituency.

#### 9. New army and police postal voters who are above the recruitment age

The maximum entry age for army recruits is not more than 30 years of age.

However, an investigation into the voters who were cut from the electoral roll in Q3 2011 because they had joined the army showed more than 200 recruits who were more the maximum age of 30.

Of equal or perhaps greater concern is that these over-aged recruits, who changed their place of voting in the 3Q of 2011, were then moved to another constituency in 4Q 2011.

For example, Abu Talib bin Ahmad (IC: 690625086571), aged 42, was taken out of the 3Q 2011 electoral roll because he had joined the army. He was originally registered in the parliamentary district of Kuala Kangsar in Perak as a regular voter with a civilian IC address.

According to the 4Q 2011 supplementary electoral roll, this voter, who was then registered in the parliamentary constituency of Jeli in Kelantan, was then transferred to the parliamentary constituency of Ketereh as a postal voter.

In other words, in the space of six months, this voter, who was not only over 30 years of age, had also experienced two changes in his voting constituency from Kuala Kangsar to Jeli and from Jeli to Ketereh.

Abu Talib bin Ahamd, aged 42, was registered as a new army postal voter in 3Q 2011.

Examples such as these raise the possibility that over-aged voters have been illegally 'recruited' as army postal voters and then quickly transferred from one electoral constituency to another in successive quarters in order to 'mask' the origin of these suspicious army recruits.

In the Q4 2011 data, the EC no longer gave details of why voters were deleted from the electoral roll, which meant that voters who joined the army and police could no longer be detected. One wonders why EC altered the structure of the data released by quarter from 3Q 2011 to 4Q 2011.

How much difference will these 'problematic' voters make?

At the end of the day, one should ask the question of how many 'problematic' voters are in the electoral roll. The simple answer is that we really do not know.

The cases highlighted under these 10 categories number approximately 100,000. But even within these categories, an exhaustive analysis has not been conducted because of time and manpower limitations.

NONEThese problems could potentially be the tip of the iceberg. They do not include addresses with a large number of registered voters. They do not include the 42,000 voters whose IC numbers could not be found in the NRD database.

They do not include other categories such as the insertion and removal of registered voters who do not appear in any of the quarterly electoral roll updates. They do not include other categories of possible electoral manipulation which have not yet been analysed or investigated such as the registration of voters in non-existent addresses.

The inclusion of these categories could easily increase the number of problematic voters to 400,000 names or approximately 1,800 votes divided over 222 parliamentary constituencies.

Considering that 35 seats out of 222 were won or lost by less than 2,000 votes, these problematic voters can potentially affect the balance of power in the next general election.

History repeats itself?

If one does not think that the presence of these problematic voters is not sufficient to swing the overall election results, I point to two past precedents where sudden increases in the number of voters in the electoral roll in states which were lost by BN which probably helped win the BN win back these states.

The two states are Sabah after the 1990 elections and Terengganu after the 1999 elections. We see the same pattern being repeated in the state of Selangor leading up to the 13th general election.

The number of voters in Sabah increased by 17.6% from 1990 to 1995 compared to the national average of 13.0%. This was just after PBS left the BN coalition prior to the 1990 Sabah state elections. PBS controlled the Sabah state government from 1990 to 1994.

In the state of Terengganu, the number of voters increased by a whopping 17.7% from 1999 to 2004 compared to a national average of 7.3%. Again, it is noteworthy that the state of Terengganu had fallen to the opposition during the 1999 general elections.

In 1999, the opposition won 28 out of 32 state seats and all eight parliamentary seats. In 2004, after this massive increase in the number of voters, the opposition won only one parliamentary and four state seats, an almost total reverse of the 1999 general election results.

In Selangor, according to the Q4 2011 electoral roll, the number of voters has increased by over 340,000 to more than 1.9 million voters since the 2008 general election. This represents an increase of 21.8% compared to a national average of 16.3%.

Some of these increases have occurred in areas which limited increases in the number of new housing estates and population inflows.

NONE For example, the seat of Hulu Selangor, a marginal parliamentary seat, saw an increase of more than 17,000 voters, or 27.1%, from the 2008 general election to the Q4 2011 electoral roll.

Finally, for those who use the fact that the opposition managed to win a historic number of parliamentary seats and control of five state governments in the 2008 general election to say that the electoral roll is relatively clean and accurate, one could easily respond by saying that the opposition could have won even more seats if the electoral roll did not include these problematic voters.

The upcoming 13th general election is expected to be one of the most closely contested electoral battles in our nation's history. This increases the importance of having a relatively clean and transparent electoral roll to ensure that the results are a fair representation of the will of the electorate.

Without a strong commitment by the authorities, including the PSC on electoral reform, EC, NRD and the government of the day to firstly identify and then address these problems, the accuracy of the electoral roll cannot be ascertained with any degree of confidence.

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