

## **Absentee voting 'only for army trainers' in Palapes**

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**By Aidila Razak**

Only military personnel providing training for the Reserve Officers Training Unit (Palapes) are allowed to register as absentee voters, the Election Commission (EC) has clarified.

“...Palapes trainers cannot register as absentee voters, but trainers who are military personnel on duty at Palapes camps can,” EC head Abdul Aziz Yusof said in a text-message to *Malaysiakini* late yesterday.

“As such, Palapes voting localities exist to place trainers who are military personnel and register as absentee voters.”

The law also allows spouses of military personnel, including those who are Palapes trainers, to apply for absentee voter status, he said.

“Otherwise, they can just register as ordinary voters,” Abdul Aziz said in responding to issues raised yesterday by PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar.

Mahfuz had sought an explanation as to why some 113 absentee voters are registered in Palapes localities, as shown in the first quarter 2012 supplementary electoral roll.

About half of them have been registered with their civilian MyKad numbers, raising suspicion that they may be university students enrolled in Palapes, who by right should not be allowed absentee voter status.

However, *Malaysiakini's* checks of the list of 113 names provided by Mahfuz showed that most of those involved are women, while the military personnel are men.

Further checks with the EC website on randomly-selected civilians' names on the list showed that these had been registered in army camps or military colleges, and that they were now seeking to be changed to Palapes localities.

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