

EC says poll respondents may be just ignorant

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By Leven Woon

The Election Commission (EC) is unperturbed by the latest poll findings by Merdeka Centre that shows widespread distrust towards the electoral process, saying that the respondents “might not know what they are talking about”.

The survey results announced yesterday shows among others, an astounding 92 percent of the 1,019 respondents support a clean-up of the electoral roll.

In addition, 49 percent of those interviewed do not believe that the electoral process is free from irregularity while 51 percent think the postal voting process lacks transparency and is open to political interference.

When contacted by Malaysiakini today, EC deputy chief Wan Ahmad Wan Omar dismissed the poll question on the electoral roll as being too general, as it has the tendency to prompt respondents to reply “yes”, following common sense.

“The question is obvious and by logic, everybody will say they want a clean electoral roll, including the EC.

“I wonder why there are still eight percent of them who replied negatively to the question,” he said mockingly.

‘Perception not reality’

When reminded that the poser was instead about the electoral roll clean-up, and not a clean electoral roll, Wan Ahmad (below) said the negative result might have arisen due to perception.

“But perception does not mean truth. Many of them might only hear one side of the story. They don’t bother to read the election laws and don’t understand the nature of the EC’s job.

“I am not sure whether they understand what they talking about. I am not saying everybody does not, but from my experience, a lot of them don't, they just echo what other people say,” he said.

Wan Ahmad however noted that the EC was aware of the negative perception and it has been cleaning the electoral roll since "day one".

He also took a swipe at the way research group Merdeka Centre conducted its poll, saying that they should at first ask the interviewees of the latter’s knowledge of the electoral process, election laws and the like.

“If you just get a guy on the street and ask, he will never bother. Maybe he just registered (to

vote) last year.

“But if he has read the laws, then he will be fair to us,” he said.

‘No hanky panky’

Wan Ahmad insisted that the EC is conducting matters exactly to the rules and laws available with “no hanky panky”.

When asked whether the EC still thinks that the call for electoral reforms is politically-motivated now that the general public appears to back its aspirations, he said electoral reform is a “widely accepted agenda” already.

He said the formation of the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on the issue and the EC’s initiatives to implement indelible ink have proved his point.

“The country needs electoral reform, and we are doing the reforms,” he said.

Asked again whether the survey will expedite the implementation of such reforms, Wan Ahmad said, “We could not be bothered by this (the survey), because we are already committed (to reform).”

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