

Unfair to slam us on polls observer plan, says EC chief
MalaysiaKini.com
July 3, 2012
By Nigel Aw

The Election Commission (EC) has been unfairly criticised for its move to appoint five election observers for the 13th general election, says its chief Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof.

"The observers that we are considering to appoint are working with us to form a guideline. It is not finalised yet.

"It is not fair for us to be criticised now as those (potential) observers are yet to be accredited," Aziz (left) said in a text message to Malaysiakini yesterday.

The EC has been facing severe criticism since it named five NGOs it intends to accredit as election observers for the next general election.

They are think-tanks Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (Ideas) and Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli), graft watchdog Transparency International-Malaysia, human rights body Promotion of Human Rights (Proham) and independent pollster Merdeka Centre.

None of the NGOs selected have much experience in electoral monitoring, while groups that specialise in the task were ignored.

An illusion of transparency

Polls watchdog Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections (Mafrel) chairperson Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, in expressing his disappointment, lamented that these NGOs were chosen over observers with long-time groundwork experience.

Syed Ibrahim also accused the EC of attempting to create a false perception that the commission was being transparent.

Aziz in an interview with New Straits Times recently said Mafrel was not selected because it "is biased and pro-opposition".

Electoral reform movement Bersih has also slammed the EC's electoral observers plan as a mere public relations exercise.

Aside from the credentials of the five NGOs the EC selected, Bersih also complained that there were too many rules constraining the observers from functioning effectively.

According to Bersih, among the constraints are that the election observers appointed cannot engage with the media, their findings must go through the EC before being published and they cannot able take photographs of fraud without the presiding officer's permission.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/202528>