

Ahead of polls, Bersih warns of paranoia over migrants

MalaysiaKini.com

March 28, 2013

By Stuart Grudgings, Reuters

Electoral reform movement Bersih warned today that fears over phantom voters and electoral fraud are spawning xenophobic and racist attacks against migrants.

The group said it has received complaints about an ongoing demonisation of migrants in political ceramah sessions, online videos and leaflets.

"We are particularly disturbed by reports of online multimedia content and Facebook pages allegedly making partisan, xenophobic statements under the name of Bersih.

"We wish to state clearly that we do not condone racism and xenophobia," the Bersih secretariat said in a press statement yesterday.

One such online video shows a local waking up to find foreigners in his home, who were supposedly registered as voters using his house address.

The video, uploaded by NasiKandar1957, ends with a display of Bersih's logo.

Another example cited by Bersih is a leaflet written in the Bahasa Indonesia, Bangladeshi, Burmese and Arabic languages that warns foreigners not to vote during the general election.

'Don't succumb to xenophobia'

The leaflet carries the 'Asalkan Bukan Umno' (ABU) logo.

Bersih said it understands the anger of many Malaysians over allegations of electoral fraud, especially following testimonies made by former government officers to the royal commission of inquiry on illegal migrants in Sabah.

"It is even more disheartening that the instances of fraud appear to have been conducted with impunity, with those affected having little recourse to justice," said Bersih.

However, the group stressed that disgruntled Malaysians should not turn to xenophobia and hate crimes.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/225113>

