

## **Five BN candidates possess bogus degrees, claims DAP**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**April 17, 2013**

**By Hafiz Yatim**

DAP election strategist Ong Kian Ming has questioned the academic qualifications of five Selangor BN candidates, which he claims come from questionable foreign education institutions.

Ong (left) named two parliamentary and three state candidates and questioned how BN could claim to have a "competent, dynamic and progressive" line-up when these candidates had degrees from bogus universities.

The BN candidates were revealed yesterday with great fanfare by Selangor BN chairperson Najib Abdul Razak, the DAP election strategist said.

Even Selangor BN coordinator Mohd Zin Mohamed, Ong pointed out, also had said that its candidates "are highly competent, dynamic and progressive, qualified individuals from various backgrounds who can take the state to greater heights in tandem with the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP)".

"It is highly disappointing that five BN candidates, two at the parliamentary and three at the state level, listed academic qualifications from institutions that can be best described as 'degree mills' – in other words, fake universities and colleges that issue bogus academic degrees for a payment," Ong said.

"I call upon these five BN Selangor candidates to explain and to refute the fact that all of them have listed qualifications from reported degree mills. If they cannot properly explain to the voters, I urge them to withdraw themselves from contesting in the 13th general election."

Of the five named as possessing qualifications from the "degree mills", one is from Gerakan, one from Umno and three from the MCA.

Kohilan threatens to sue Ong

Meanwhile, caretaker Deputy Foreign Minister A Kohilan Pillay, who is one of the five named responded immediately, asking Ong to provide the evidence to his claim.

"Anyway I will see about suing Ong for making such an allegation," Kohilan told Malaysiakini.

This Gerakan leader, who is running for Puchong parliamentary seat under the BN ticket, says he holds a first degree in Economics from the Connaught University in Ireland and an M Sc in Commercial and Industrial Economy from Pacific Western University, United States, as listed in the Foreign Ministry website.

BN candidate Lee Ban Seng from the MCA, who will be contesting in the Kajang state seat, denied Ong's assertion, saying his degree is from the American Liberty University and not Rutherford University as stated.

Ong said it was a disgrace to the country if indeed its deputy foreign minister is a leader who has "bought" a degree from a degree mill in order to bolster his credentials.

Malaysiakini is withholding the other three names until they respond to our questions.

Ong however noted that there was no requirement that an election candidate must have a degree.

"Truthfully speaking, having academic qualifications, even at the post-graduate level, from prestigious universities all over the world do not automatically make a person a better candidate than someone without a degree.

"However, candidates who feel as if they had to 'buy' a degree, either at the undergraduate or postgraduate levels, inevitably call their own integrity into question.

"If these candidates are willing to dupe voters about their academic qualifications, which is an important part of any person's life, what other areas of life would these candidates be willing to lie about, including in areas of public interest such as the management of public funds and the proper and responsible use of public resources?" Ong asked.