

'Filipino got citizenship, became Umno secretary'

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By Nigel Aw

SABAH RCI A Filipino national who arrived in Sabah got a blue identity card (IC) through dubious means and went on to become an Umno branch secretary, the royal commission of inquiry (RCI) on immigrants heard today.

Fifty-three-year-old Shukur Abdullah said he arrived in Kudat with his aunt by boat in 1976, as refugees during the conflict in southern Philippines.

Upon arrival, Shukur said he obtained the IMM13, an identification document for refugees, as well as a working pass and later married a fellow Filipino in 1982.

Later, his application for a green identity card, which allows temporary residence, was rejected but his second attempt, this time for a blue identity card which carries citizenship status, was approved.

"I used a statutory declaration (surat akuan) with the support of my village chief for the application," he said, adding that he received the blue identity card less than a year after making the application.

Prior to 1988, the National Registration Department (NRD) accepted statutory declarations as evidence that one was born in Sabah and this loophole had been abused by illegal immigrants to claim themselves to be locals.

"I was forced to say that I was born in Sabah (to get the IC approval), I said I was born in Kudat," he said when questioned by conducting officer Azmi Ariffin.

Azmi: With the IC, you would have received other benefits?

Shukur: I got a driving licence... I also applied for a (Malaysian) passport in 1999 to go to Brunei.

Azmi: Other than documents, have you voted?

Shukur: Every election without fail.

Azmi: Including the last one?

Shukur: Yes.

Azmi: Do you hold party positions?

Shukur: I am the secretary of Kampung Tanjung Kapor Umno branch, Kudat.

When asked if he knew his blue identity card application was not done in accordance with the law, Shukur said he had wanted a new life.

"If I did not say I was born in Kudat, my application may have been rejected.

"I want to live in Sabah forever, I do not want to go back to the Philippines," he said.

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