

Penang MACC head shoots down PKR's allegations

MalaysiaKini.com

July 13, 2013

By Susan Loone

The Penang Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has refuted allegations by PKR that none of the candidates who lodged complaints on alleged vote-buying in the general elections had been called to give their statements.

NONEState MACC director Samarajoo Manikam (left) said that the statements from all the seven complainants had been recorded including the one by former speaker and Teluk Bahang candidate Abdul Halim Hussain.

"As per our normal and standard procedures, we did take statements from all seven complainants," Samarajoo told Malaysiakini.

He denied there was a "grand design" to issue a statement on the matter on Tuesday, at a press conference after a dialogue session between the commission, head of government departments and politicians.

"There was no grand design in this matter as it was only a response to a question asked by a reporter during the press meet after the conclusion of a community education program that was held on July 9 at Hotel Royale, in George Town," he said.

"I only stated that evidence obtained thus far did not disclose an offence under the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission ACT 2009," he added.

Samarajoo was referring to Abdul Halim's comment that the PKR candidates who lodged the reports have yet to receive any official statement on the matter.

Abdul Halim had also claimed that none of the candidates involved had been called to give their statements.

Bagful of evidence provided claim

The seven reports were filed in May by Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin, Abdul Halim and five other candidates - Mohd Tuah Ismail (PKR-Pulau Betong), Norhayati Jaafar (PKR-Teluk Air Tawar), Ahmad Zakiyuddin Abd Rahman (PKR-Pinang Tunggal), Muhammad Bakhtiar Wan Chik (PKR-Balik Pulau parliamentary seat) dan Asnah Hashim (PAS-Bagan Lepas) - who all lost to BN with majorities of less than 1,000.

They alleged they had provided "evidence" which included video clips, that voters had lined up to redeem their lucky vouchers given to them by BN, at makeshift shop lots in various areas on May 10, five days after the polls.

They claimed that the shop lots featured the 10 constituencies won by BN on manila cards pasted on the entrance of the shop lots.

However, Samarajoo had said that the commission was unable to trace the individuals or groups which had dished out the money, while the witnesses questioned did not know who gave them the vouchers, nor were they asked to vote for BN.

As a result of the probe, Samarajoo said he had recommended to the attorney-general that the cases be closed.

NONEAt the same press conference with Abdul Halim (right) yesterday, lawyer S Raveentharan had questioned the timing of Samarajoo's comment.

Raveentharan, who is handling the petition on electoral fraud filed by PKR's losing candidates, said Samarajoo's statement may be "prejudicial" to the case.

"The case (petition on electoral fraud) is being mentioned on July 23, and his statement that the case is closed as there is no proof of vote-buying can be prejudicial as it can influence the judge, because they also read the news," Raveentharan had said.

Abdul Halim and Balik Pulau parliamentary candidate Muhammad Bakhtiar Wan Chik had filed two petition over alleged electoral fraud at the Penang High Court on June 13.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/235553>