

EC: Cash for transport with no conditions not a bribe
MalaysiaKini.com
July 26, 2013

The practice of giving transport allowance during elections is not considered a bribe, provided no condition is attached, the Election Commission said today.

NONEEC chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof (left) said the practice would violate the law if the person dishing out the transport allowance urges voters to cast their ballots for a particular candidate.

"I was made to understand by the MACC (for example in the case of Sabah and Sarawak voters returning home from the peninsula) that if the money is given to voters and the voters are just told to go back and vote, then it is not an offence.

"EC has not received any official complaint with regard to this matter," Abdul Aziz added in a text message to Malaysiakini.

He was responding to reports that voters in the Kuala Besut by-election received money from Kampung Beris Lampu village chief Yaakob Kadir, who is aligned with the BN.

NONEAbdul Aziz was also asked to comment on PAS giving free petrol to motorcyclists during the election campaign.

However, Yaakob, who is also the village security and development committee head, denied that he had bribed the voters, saying the money provided was an incentive for outstation voters to return and cast their ballots.

"If it was bribery, it would have been done quietly. We gave it (the incentive) to everybody, regardless of whether they vote for BN or PAS.

"Returning voters would surely support PAS (anyway)," Yaakob told Malaysiakini.

NONEMeanwhile, PAS Kuala Besut candidate Azlan Yusof's campaign manager Hanafiah Mat urged the EC to take action against the disbursement of the travel allowance.

"This is blatant bribery, without any sense of shame or embarrassment," Hanafiah said.

In Wednesday's by-election, BN candidate Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abdul Rahman clinched the state seat, defeating Azlan with a 2,592-vote majority.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/236839>