

## **'EC fuels vote-buying by justifying travel allowance'**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**July 27, 2013**

**By Nigel Aw**

The Election Commission's (EC) position that handing out "travel allowances" to voters in the recently-concluded Kuala Besut by-election is not wrong will only serve to fuel vote-buying in future elections, says PAS.

"The EC refuses to take responsibility in enforcing election laws and instead justifies that paying out travel allowance is not wrong.

NONE "In future, people will just hand out more cash in elections under the pretense of 'travel allowance'. Ultimately, the country's democratic process will suffer," PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar (right) told Malaysiakini today.

EC chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said yesterday that paying travel allowances to voters was not an offence, as long as those dishing them out did not urge the recipients to specifically vote for anyone.

Visits to two sites where the travel allowances were being handed out showed the places to be decorated with BN flags as well as stickers that read "Saya pilih BN" (I choose BN).

Mahfuz said that by right, the EC should not allow money politics under the guise of anything in an election.

Asked about PAS Youth's action in giving free petrol to motorcyclists in Kuala Besut on polling day, Mahfuz defended the action.

NONE "I was not there and did not personally see it on polling day, but from what I understand, PAS Youth gave free petrol to everybody, not only to the voters.

"The petrol was given as there were people needing to go back to work and there were even people from outside Kuala Besut who received the petrol," Mahfuz said.

PAS candidate Azlan Yusof, who polled 5,696 votes, was defeated by BN's Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman, who bagged 8,288 votes to win with a 2,592-vote majority.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/236919>

