

## **Despite threats of backlash, Orang Asli voted DAP**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Sept 20, 2013**

**By Ram Anand**

BERSIH TRIBUNAL Despite alleged threats that he would have his access to free healthcare and free education taken away, and despite not knowing of any other political party other than the BN, an Orang Asli from Pahang did the unexpected on polling day: he voted for DAP.

He is Zainal Kaptar, a first-time voter from a remote village in Kuala Lipis, Pahang.

NONEZainal told the People's Tribunal on GE13 yesterday evening that the candidate for the Cameron Highlands parliamentary seat, G Palanivel, "warned" that education and hospital fees would no longer be free for the indigenous villagers if their votes went to DAP.

Asked by the tribunal panel as to who he had voted for, in spite of admitting that he was also swayed by the "influence" and "pressure" of the BN machinery, Zainal said he voted for the "Rocket" (DAP).

"I voted for the Rocket," he told the tribunal, despite admitting earlier that he only knew of the Rocket symbol when he saw the ballot papers at the polling centres, stunning a room of 50 people at the tribunal.

Zainal took more than 24 hours to get to the tribunal venue at the Empire Hotel in Subang Jaya, Selangor, from his remote village in Kuala Lipis, spending a night in a village called Cherok in Pahang.

He arrived at the tribunal venue at 4pm yesterday after beginning his journey from his village at 1pm on Wednesday.

'They forced us to vote for BN'

"They forced us to vote for BN. They were scaring us, that we needed to pay at the hospital," Zainal said.

His allegations were confirmed by neighbouring villager Norman Kong, who said that Palanivel made the threat that the villagers would have to start paying for healthcare and education if they voted for DAP.

Kong said the villagers were paid RM20 each and told to vote for BN, while being

promised an additional RM80 after they had cast their votes.

"But I never saw the other part (of the money). Instead, going back home after voting, all I saw was a spoilt chicken. I told my wife, we rather have our own tapioca rather than have spoilt chicken," he said.

He said that BN's Jelai state seat candidate Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail even promised the villagers fresh beef and rice if they voted for BN.

"But I only smelt the food. Never tasted it," Kong, who has voted three times so far, told the tribunal.

"I am here today, because I voted for BN three times and I am yet to see any change. They promised roads and schools and houses and we are not getting them," he said.

Kong made an eight-hour trip that began at 8am in the morning in order to reach the tribunal premises.

Both Wan Rosdy and Palanivel won their respective seats for BN.

Palanivel defeated DAP's M Manogaran by a wafer-thin majority of 462 votes, while Wan Rosdy won the Jelai seat by defeating Abdul Karim Nor of PAS with a comfortable 3,182-vote majority.

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