

## **Bersih fumes no politics found in 'Project IC'**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Dec 4, 2014**

The Bersih coalition has accused government chief secretary Ali Hamsa of whitewashing the findings of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on Immigrants in Sabah.

In a statement, it said it is “beyond comprehension” how Ali reached the conclusion that there were no political motives involved in the illegal issuance of identity cards (IC).

“By right, the damning testimonies on 'Project IC' and the questions raised over the involvement of politicians in the highest echelons of power, should be further examined in a court of law.

“We are dismayed the RCI did not come up with any recommendations on this, despite asking the questions themselves,” it said today.

The coalition refers to a passage in RCI report that refers to the testimonies of five witnesses: Sandakan district officer Hassnar Ebrahim, and four Sabah National Registration Department (NRD) officers Ramli Kamarudin, Abdul Rauf Sani, Asli Sidup and Yakob Damsah.

“It is clear that there was a clandestine exercise involving senior officers in the NRD, Sabah, who apparently acted on the orders from their political superiors.

“This clandestine exercise involved illegal activities relating to the processing and issuance of Malaysian identification documents to illegal immigrants in pursuit of a political agenda.

“The names mentioned by some of the above witnesses have included Harris Salleh, the former chief minister of Sabah; Aziz Shamsuddin, the former political secretary of the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the late Megat Junid (left), the then Deputy Home Affairs Minister,” the report said.

However, the report also notes that all politicians implicated by these witnesses have all denied involvement, apart from Megat Junid, who had passed away.

The commission ultimately concludes that Project IC “probably” exists.

Yesterday while presenting the report, Ali had said the RCI has cleared political parties and the government of involvement in Project IC.

Effect on Sabah electoral roll

Meanwhile, Bersih also slammed attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail for stating that the

number of non-citizens in the electoral roll are negligible, saying that the RCI did not have this conclusion.

Instead, the RCI report only quoted the various figures provided by witnesses without assessing its accuracy, and saying that the actual figure is uncertain.

The witnesses include Sabah Rural Development Minister Radin Malleh, who said there are 80,620 holders of dubious ICs on the electoral roll.

Bersih says Radin's claim underscores the movement's insistence that the electoral roll must be cleaned up before delineation can proceed.

It also said the RCI report should be made widely available at no cost, due to its implications to national security, democracy, and nationhood.

The electoral reform movement said it is "vexed" by the fact that the report is available for RM100 a copy, only in Putrajaya and Kota Kinabalu.

In addition, Bersih said the report launch was an invitation-only event, despite earlier assurances that the document would be tabled in Parliament.

According to RCI secretary Saripuddin Kasim, the report will only be available in hard copy to minimise the chance of tampering.

'More than financial motivation'

Separately, founder of the NGO Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia (SAMM) Badrul Hisham Shaharin said all those involved in illegally issuing ICs should be hauled to court.

It said it is "impossible" that this is purely financially motivated.

"The act of selling ICs is treasonous to the sovereignty and security of the country in general, and of Sabah in particular.

"The federal government cannot remain silent. Those responsible need to be dragged to face justice.

"Or, is the government trying to hide something?" Badrul Hisham said in a statement today.

He also alleged that the delay in releasing the report is to change some facts and findings of the report, to "hide the treasonous acts of some parties".

Previously, to suggestions that the delay was to give time for changes to be made, Saripuddin defended the integrity of the RCI report.

"Not a single dot has been changed," said Saripuddin.

He added that he was only following the cabinet's instructions on the date of the release.

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