

'RCI a con for Sabahans to vote BN in GE13'

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The Royal Commission of Inquiry on Illegal Immigrants in Sabah (RCI) is a political ploy to cheat Sabahans into voting for BN in GE13, says Jeffrey Kitingan.

Kitingan, who is also the Sabah Reform Party (Star) chairperson, said this was apparent in the findings of the RCI report and the "political play" by Chief Secretary Ali Hamsa at its release on Wednesday.

"It is now clear that the RCI was nothing more than a political gimmick for GE13 to hoodwink Sabahans to vote BN and a manipulated cover-up to absolve the federal government, its leaders and the political party referred to in the RCI from Project IC," Kitingan said in a statement today.

Commenting on the release of the RCI report after much delay, Kitingan criticised Ali's political play at the press conference in saying that Project IC did not exist when it was clear that the RCI specifically made a finding that Project IC "probably existed".

Kitingan accused the federal government of being "insincere" to tackle the issue of undocumented migrants in Sabah from the beginning.

Faced with a potential revolt by Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) and a loss in the 2013 general election, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak relented with the setting up of the RCI in a face-saving political gimmick, Kitingan said.

He said it was clear from the outset, with the formation of the RCI and the delay in setting out its Terms of Reference (TOR).

When the TOR was announced, said Kitingan, it only reinforced the view that the RCI was just a whitewash to pacify angry Sabahans including the President of PBS who had issued an ultimatum that if the issue of "illegal immigrants" was not resolved, PBS would act.

"Now that the Report of the RCI has been released, the government has deemed it not to be a 'Royal Commission' but a mere 'Commission of Enquiry'. Such is the insincerity of the federal government," he claimed.

'Dubious voters in electoral roll'

Kitingan said that despite the RCI's limited scope and lack of pursuit of the truth by the parties involved, it is important to note that the commission made two substantive findings.

The first, he said, is the issuance of at least 67,675 blue ICs to “illegal immigrants” and the granting of citizenship to at least 68,703 foreigners, which exact numbers could not be determined by the RCI.

The second finding, he added, is the undetermined number of illegal immigrants which have been entered into the electoral rolls.

“Of course, the numbers cannot be ascertained by the RCI as there was a lack of effort and political will to present all evidence before the commission.

“In reality, the number is at least 1.5 to 1.7 million ICs dubiously issued, based on the population census in 2010,” he said.

Kitingan said that based on the GE13 electoral roll, the number of dubious voters was at least 250,000 to 300,000, out of a total of 982,337 registered voters in Sabah.

On the RCI’s opinion that the government and political parties were not involved in Project IC, Kitingan called it a laughable and feeble attempt to absolve the federal government and past leaders.

Kitingan claimed that Umno had set up a membership recruitment high-level taskforce with leading senior leaders, some of whom are still in government.

“The alleged corrupt officials at JPN were not also Election Commission officials and this was not considered when the RCI opined that the government was not implicated,” he said.

He claimed that other than the two findings, which is only a mild acknowledgement of the true numbers and which he said everyone in Sabah already knows, no one in Sabah believes the RCI Report.

“Sabahans everywhere are now even angrier against the federal government for the cover-up,” he added.