

Election official witnesses 'vote-buying'
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Soon Li Tsin

The polling process may be a highly guarded and secretive act of democracy but a source has revealed that the Ijok by-election was tainted with vote buying and other misdemeanours.

The source who was by official duty stationed in a polling station in Ijok, said that all polling officials, agents and observers were first required to sign a form that protects the secrecy of the process.

"But nobody really follows it anyway," the source who declined to be named told malaysiakini.

The official then gave an eyewitness testimonial about a woman voter who asked for money from the presiding officer (the Election Commission officer in charge of the polling station).

"I remember her name and she was 27 years old. She was a rather plump Malay woman and she was wearing an aerobic-like suit.

"After voting, she showed a letter to the presiding officer and said 'Mana duit untuk tambang?' (Where is the money for the journey)," said the official.

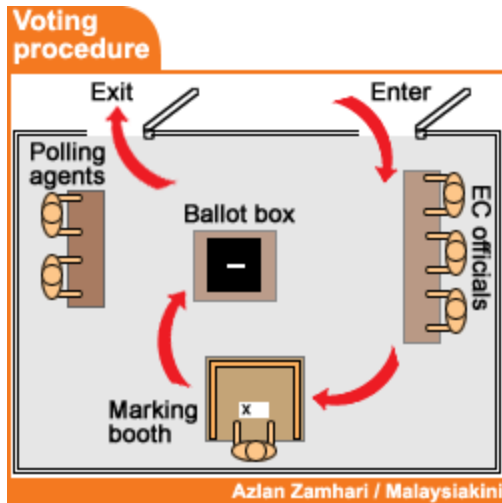
"The presiding official was embarrassed and let the woman walk out of the room," said the official.

However, the source pointed out that she looked much older than her stated age in her IC.

An election observer managed to take a picture of the woman and her vehicle after receiving a tip off from the official inside.

Asking money from PKR too

Parti Keadilan Rakyat's international bureau chief Faisal Mustaffa who was in charge of the that particular polling station said the said woman was in their 'suspect' list of questionable voters.



"The list consisted of about 30 names of voters who had incomplete addresses and were not known by the people in the area.

"She was on that list and we had it confirmed that she made an appearance," he said.

He said he later received an SMS bearing her name and her IC number asking for payment because she claimed voting for PKR.

"[...] asked where to collect fare. She has a claim form with her name and a letter from Umno. She is [her voter number]," the text message read.

Faisal said he was highly suspicious of her intent and did not reply to it.

"I did not reply and I don't know who she is. She then sent a second SMS asking me not to circulate her first SMS," he said.

In Saturday's by-election, PKR candidate Khalid Ibrahim lost to Barisan Nasional's K Parthiban by a 1,850 vote majority amid allegations of election irregularities and phantom voters.

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