

Wanita Umno's spending spree 'not a bribe'
Malaysiakini.com
November 02, 2010

The Election Commission is convinced that the RM20 disbursed recently to many people prior to a Wanita Umno dinner at Batu Sapi, Sabah, was not to buy votes.

azlanContacted today, chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof also said such claims are hard to prove.

"We hear a lot about this, people giving bicycles and food. They can say it is for all sorts of reasons. Look at PAS, they say the RM250 for out-of-town (Galas) voters is not a bribe, but transport allowance," he said in a lengthy phone interview.

Furthermore, such batu sapi bn vote buying photo 3 giving moneyh offences under the Election Offences Act 1954 are even more difficult to prove, as one cannot show that the recipient will vote for the party which disbursed the 'bribe'.

"Our votes are confidential, so how do you know that person voted for the party which gave him the money? I don't see that there is a contract.

"There are many lawyers today and they can spin things to change from black to white, so you have to make sure you have clear evidence and are 100 percent sure it happened. Otherwise it will be a waste of effort."

Malaysiakini had reported that Wanita Umno was spotted handing over RM20 to those willing to state their details including political affiliation.

In batu sapi bn vote buying photo 1 the footage recorded by a journalist, those who received the money had to show their myKad apparently to prove that they are Batu Sapi voters.

Asked why she was in line, a woman said: "It is for voters. You need just to show your MyKad to prove that you are a voter in order to get the money."

Most of those in the queue were Chinese Malaysians even though the event was for the wing's workers.

Wanita Umno chief Shahrizat Jalil has claimed that the money was for party workers who had travelled from across Sabah to help out.

Over to EC legal department

After reading the report and viewing the video, Abdul Aziz sent a text message to Malaysiakini to state that he is convinced that the RM20 was indeed meant for party workers and not for voters.

batu sapi bn vote buying photo 7 lining up "After reading (the report) I think they are party workers from all over Sabah and more importantly they are not even Batu Sapi voters.

"RM20 cash given was for transport expenses and the Malaysiakini reporter was also given RM20, how nice. What is this?"

He added that he will pass the report and video to the commission's legal adviser to study and take further action if necessary.

(The journalist went undercover and joined the queue to obtain proof of the disbursement. The money will be handed to the EC to assist with its probe.)

Aziz also sabatu sapi bn vote buying photo 2id this is the first complaint he has received about such offences in either Batu Sapi or Galas, where a by-election will be held simultaneously on Thursday.

Section 8 of the Election Offences Act 1954 states that any person who party or wholly pays or enables the procuring of food, drink, refreshment, money, tickets or any provisions to induce someone to give or refrain from voting for a certain candidate is guilty of the offence of treating.

The offence can be committed either before, during or after an election.

- AFP

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/147134>