

U-turn on ink : a black mark for EC
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 04, 2008

Opposition parties today slammed the Election Commission for the last-minute reversal of its plan to use the indelible ink in the coming general election, which they claimed could have stopped the menace of phantom voters.
MCPX

In an immediate reaction, PKR's deputy president Dr Syed Husin Ali did not mince his words when he charged that the cancellation of the use of indelible ink was clear proof that the "EC is colluding with BN to allow cheating in the coming general elections".

"Despite all assurances and false gestures, it is now clear the (EC chairperson) Abdul Rashid (Abdul Rahman) is content to conduct the 12th general election in an atmosphere completely bereft of integrity," he said in a statement.

"Citing 'public order' and 'security' is also nonsensical reasoning that is perfectly consistent with the language of forces around the world who seek to suppress democratic freedoms," he added.

Syed Husin said that polls reform group Bersih, which represents not just political parties but a wide swathe of civil society, has campaigned tirelessly for indelible ink to be used to battle the scourge of phantom voters.

He also said that candidates have observed irregularities in postal voting, and revealed "hundreds and thousands" of false addresses, dead individuals and voters over 100 years old in the electoral rolls.

"At a moment where the eyes of the entire world are upon us, the EC has now conclusively and irrevocably shown that any overtures towards reform that it had made previously were in bad faith, and that in decisive moments, the EC will yield to every demand of its political masters," Syed Husin decried.

He however said that the PKR noted one positive outcome of this development - that the BN intelligence must clearly be showing a swing towards the opposition, thus forcing them to resort once again to phantom voters and other forms of cheating.

Under protest

Meanwhile PAS leader and member of Bersih's steering committee Dr Dzulkifli Ahmad also similarly expressed his outrage with EC's stunning reversal today.

"This means that none of our demands are getting through. We thought it would at least go through with (using indelible ink)," said the director of PAS Research Centre.

"We want to make it clear that we are entering this election under protest," he said.

"We could foresee this coming. Now, our concerns and anxieties are immensely vindicated."

Despite his outrage with the EC's move, Dzulkifli urged opposition candidates and

sympathisers to remain calm and focus on the task at hand - winning the upcoming polls.

"We will not be provoked. We will remain resilient, calm and relentless. We will maintain the due process of the elections. We will not destroy our chances of victory and will not do anything untoward."

After the polls, however, Bersih would "surely" file a petition on this matter, Dzul kifli said.

DAP looking at legal avenues

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng also said that the decision today would only benefit BN as it amounted to the EC sanctioning the ruling party's "cheating and abuses" in the election.

He said that the EC must also explain as to how the use of indelible ink can threaten public order and security issues.

"It is ridiculous that the use of indelible ink can put the whole country into chaos and ruination," he said.

He also said that the decision to cancel the use of indelible ink meant that the EC was wasting the RM2 million spent on buying 47,000 bottles of indelible ink.

"The EC has also destroyed its credibility, integrity and independence by cancelling the use at the last minute when it had earlier touted the use of indelible ink as a sign of its commitment towards ensuring free, fair, clean elections," he said.

He warned that the people might not accept the results of the election on March 8 if it was tainted by abuses, cheating and vote rigging.

Lim also said that DAP was exploring legal avenues to see how it can prevent the EC from abandoning the use of indelible ink.

Mafrel PC tomorrow

PKR vice-president R Sivarasa, who is also the candidate for Selangor's Subang parliamentary seat, matched the indignation unleashed by Dzul kifli.

"I am completely shocked by this decision. It is tantamount to perpetuating a fraud on the elections," he said.

"From last July to just recently they told the Malaysian public that they were using indelible ink. And the reasons they give for cancelling the ink are nonsensical. How can marking someone's finger have anything to do with national security?" he asked.

Election watchdog Mafrel, when contacted, said that it would be commenting on the matter through a press conference tomorrow.

Earlier today, EC chairperson Abdul Rashid announced the cancellation of the use of the indelible ink for this general election, citing public order and security issues.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/79162>