

MCA says no to overseas voting
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 — Malaysians abroad are not qualified to vote because they are “out of touch” with the current state of affairs in the country, MCA told Parliament’s polls reform panel today.

The ruling Barisan Nasional’s (BN) Chinese party said its research showed most Malaysians outside the country only received information from questionable news sources, which it said may not reflect the “true situation” ongoing in the country.

“What they read about Malaysia may therefore be biased and is the wrong information. It does not give them the whole truthful picture about the ongoings [sic] in the country.

“The future of Malaysia should be determined by those who have faith and still remained in the country,” Datuk Ei Kim Hock, a member of the MCA central committee who headed the party’s team told the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on electoral reform today.

The MCA man’s position raised eyebrows and drew hushed whispers from among members of the public attending the hearing, which kicked off today, and even from the members of the PSC.

Fellow MCA party colleague and Alor Gajah MP Tan Sri Fong Chan Onn pointed out that the panel hearing was to propose reforms to the Election Commission on weaknesses in the electoral system, including postal voting.

Rasah MP Anthony Loke said it was unfair to paint Malaysians abroad in such sweeping strokes, pointing out that some Malaysians were “forced” to live abroad due to their studies or work.

The DAP lawmaker also pointed out those abroad have access to official sources of information through government websites and government-owned media, and asked if the MCA had no confidence in these.

Speaking for the MCA, Ei said the existing electoral system should be maintained and there was no need for reforms other than cleaning up the electoral rolls.

He said his party was against adopting the automatic voter registration proposal because “if a citizen does not want to register manually in the first place, there is not much point in forcing an individual to be in the electoral roll.”

He added that compulsory voting would be “a waste of resources”.

Ei also said his party is against extending the campaigning period, and that having a “cooling off period” between campaigning and polling was unnecessary.

He was also in favour of the present “first-past-the-post” voting system, which has been criticised for benefitting candidates from larger coalitions.

“People are already familiar with the system. A change in the method to determine the

'winner' would add confusion for the people," Ei said.

The first-past-the-post system confers victory to the candidate with the highest vote count, which is not necessarily the same as a candidate who wins an absolute majority due to the calculation technique.

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