

Many Sarawakians Residing In Johor Reluctant To Register As Voters

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By Frank Julian Martin

JOHOR BAHRU, March 27 (Bernama) -- Many Sarawakians residing in Johor are still reluctant to register as voters or move their polling stations here, said Gagasan Dayak Iban Bersatu Malaysia (GAIU) president, Sai Malaka.

Speaking to Bernama recently, Sai said many of them were still hopeful to be able to vote in their hometowns in Sarawak.

"They are at loss because they would not be able to exercise their rights during the election.

"How many of them can afford the air tickets to fly back to Sarawak to vote during the election or how many of them could find the time to do so?" he asked.

Sai said they should realise the logistical problem of doing so and register as voters or move their polling stations here and later revert their stations to Sarawak should they return there for good.

On claims by some that it was of no use to become voters here "as local leaders or political parties would not want to care about them as they are not Johorians," Sai said, this was not true.

"They got it all wrong; leaders and political parties here do care about their voters. A voter or two are important to them, what more if you come in big number," he stressed.

Sarawak Social Development Minister Tan Sri William Mawan Ikom, in early December last year, advised Sarawakians staying in Johor to register as voters or move their voting stations to the state.

He said the benefit would be that when they had problems or in need of certain services, the authority would know how to manage them because they were part of the Johor people.

There are about 40,000 Sarawakians residing in Johor where a third of them believed to be of voting age or have registered as electors in their hometowns.

Sai also told Bernama that the organisation helped to register 2,300 new voters since opening its office at No 2, Jalan Bayan 31/1, Taman Megah Ria in Masai, here.

"We will continue with the registration effort and it is hoped that many more would come to do so in future," he said, adding that those who wish to register as voters can come to GAIU's office.

Formed in July 2008, GAIU is a non-governmental organisation which acts as a platform to unite and assist Sarawakians especially the Dayak people who have migrated to Johor.

It has been working closely with Pasir Gudang parliamentarian Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled

Nordin, local political parties and leaders in many activities in constituencies in the state.

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