

Kit Siang demands Najib explain silence on RCI for Sabah illegals
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 — Lim Kit Siang flayed Datuk Seri Najib Razak today for failing to announce a royal commission of inquiry (RCI) on illegal immigrants in Sabah during his trip there.

The DAP parliamentary leader asked if the recent claim by Sabah ministers that Cabinet had agreed to the RCI was merely “hot air”, made without any factual basis.

“(Is this) another example of the Cabinet being subordinate and subservient to the dictates of Umno hegemony?” Lim (picture) said in a statement.

Online news reports today said that the prime minister had left from a two-day working visit to Sabah yesterday without announcing the formation of the RCI as expected.

Earlier this week, federal minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok announced that the Cabinet had agreed to form the RCI to look into the steady influx of illegals into the east Malaysian state.

“This is something the people of Sabah want to see over the years. I brought up the RCI issue in the Cabinet at least three times previously, but it was (left) hanging without a decision.

“I brought this issue up again in the last Cabinet meeting (on February 8), and it was then that the Federal Cabinet made a decision... the prime minister will deal with the rest,” he was quoted as saying on Bernama Online.

Dompok, who is also United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO) president, was reportedly asked to comment on talk that Najib would announce the RCI during his visit to Sabah from February 16.

“Sabahans are entitled to a clear and unequivocal answer why Najib has not announced the formation of RCI on illegal immigrants in Sabah,” Lim said today, adding that he was greatly disappointed.

He also demanded that once formed, Najib must reveal the RCI’s terms of reference, composition and deadline to ensure that its recommendations are implemented before the coming elections.

The steady influx of illegals in Sabah has been a longstanding problem faced by locals in the state, and is expected to be used as a key issue in the coming polls.

Lim, who has been a strong advocate of the RCI, noted that he has been raising the issue of illegal immigrants in Sabah for over three decades now but politicians across the divide have been turning a deaf ear to his demands.

The huge population of illegals in Sabah, he said, has been creating political, economic,

social and security problems for locals, and making them feel as if they have become "foreigners in their own homeland".

Shortly after the 2008 polls, added Lim, a motion moved by him in Parliament to form the RCI was turned down by Barisan Nasional (BN) MPs.

"I had thought that at last there would be a RCI into illegal immigrants both in Sabah and throughout Malaysia but this has proved to be premature," the Ipoh Timor MP said.

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