

8pc addresses in voter roll invalid, survey finds

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PETALING JAYA, March 30 — Up to eight per cent of voters' addresses were found to be invalid, a recent survey by the Merdeka Center and a polls reform group has shown.

Of the 92 per cent of address that were valid, only 74 per cent of voters could be recognised by a neighbour or local resident, with lower rates of recognition in urban areas.

The 2011 National Voter Registration Audit also found that 31 per cent of recognisable voters resided at their stated address, with the highest rates of non-resident voters in urban areas.

The unidentified addresses were largely concentrated in Kuala Lumpur (27 per cent), followed by Negri Sembilan (26 per cent) and Selangor (14 per cent).

"The reason for the eight per cent unidentified addresses submitted was largely attributed to the rapid development and redevelopment of the capital city and weak co-ordination between town and country planning units," the audit report said.

It added that unsatisfactory cross-department co-ordination and co-operation in ensuring changes in the locality reflected in the electoral roll were also to blame.

The National Institute for Democracy and Electoral Integrity (NIEI) said the high number of non-resident voters was "a major cause for concern" as Malaysia's first-past-the-post system was designed to let residents elect representatives based on specific local needs.

"The high-number of non-resident voters... provide for a detached and inadequately informed decision-making process," NIEI acting chairman K. Shan told reporters at Singgahsana Hotel here.

He claimed the problem was made worse by political parties that practised "cluster voter registration" at a single address to boost supporter numbers — usually along racial lines — in any given area.

This has led to incidences of several hundred voters being registered at the same address, he alleged, adding that the Election Commission's (EC) lack of auditing compounded the situation.

The audit by Merdeka Center and NIEI was conducted with a sample of 2,400 respondents across 240 polling districts from 60 parliamentary constituencies between June 4 and July 6 last year.

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