

**0.3pc margin can determine polls outcome, Anwar tells EC chairman**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 19 – Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today labelled Election Commission (EC) chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof “very irresponsible” for trivialising the existence of 42,051 “doubtful voters” in the electoral roll.

The Opposition Leader pointed out in the Dewan Rakyat today that although 42,051 only makes up 0.3 per cent of the country’s 12.6 million voters, it was this small margin that had been the deciding factor in many marginal seats during Election 2008.

“The response by this very irresponsible EC chairman was that this sum is only 0.3 per cent of voters.

“But it was this [margin] that cost Barisan Nasional (BN) the Wangsa Maju seat and cost Pakatan Rakyat (PR) Alor Setar. So don’t just answer like that,” Anwar (picture) said when debating amendments to the Election Offences Act.

At a press conference earlier this week, Abdul Aziz had insisted that the existence of the 42,051 “doubtful voters” in the roll does not make the registry dirty as claimed by many opposition lawmakers.

The EC had last year submitted the names of all 12.6 million registered voters for verification with the National Registration Department (NRD) but the department had not found the IC records for 42,051 names in its registry.

Anwar demanded today that the names be entirely removed from the roll, pointing out that in the Parliamentary Select Committee’s (PSC) final report, it was noted that these voters were not “registered citizens”.

The Permatang Pauh MP was however slammed by BN backbenchers for his suggestion.

Responding, Datuk Mohamad Aziz (BN-Sri Gading) pointed out that the EC could not arbitrarily remove the names as these voters could still be alive.

“You cannot just delete them. Permatang Pauh, sometimes the things you say make me smile,” the Umno lawmaker said.

Responding after several other interjections, Anwar pointed out that it was the bipartisan PSC that had said the 42,051 voters were not registered as citizens in the NRD’s registry.

“I never said they were foreigners. I would like to advise you to read the PSC report carefully first.

“What did the NRD say? NRD confirmed that these were not citizens. Then the EC answered later that these are considered ‘doubtful voters’... but if they are not citizens, then just

slash them from the roll," he said.

Rising to debate later, Azmin Ali (PKR-Gombak) raised similar issues and added that although the PSC was bipartisan, its chairman from BN had refused to listen to the minority members from PR.

He insisted that panel members from PR, which included him, had pressured the committee to obtain commitment from the prime minister and his deputy to implement all 22 reform recommendations to the election process before the next polls are called.

"But the PSC chairman (BN minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili) was not brave enough. The EC was not brave enough. If they were not brave enough to get this commitment, how could they be brave enough to implement reforms before the polls?" he asked.

The nine-member PSC, which was formed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in October last year, tabled a 22-point final report to the House earlier this month.

The report was later passed without debates when PR members refused to accept the Dewan Rakyat Speaker's decision not to allow the inclusion of a minority report with the panel's findings.

The minority report was to include the assertion and views of PR's three members on the panel.

PR lawmakers and civil society groups like election watchdog Bersih 2.0 had criticised the panel's findings, claiming it had failed in its original objective to implement total reform to the country's election processes.

Bersih 2.0 has even planned a sequel to its July 9 rally last year, which is set to take place this April 28 at Dataran Merdeka.

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