

**Bumburing: Dr M 'traitor' for defending Sabah migrant influx**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 11 — Former Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) leader Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing today labelled Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad a "traitor" for defending Sabah's burgeoning migrant population, saying the latter had betrayed east Malaysians with his remarks.

The Tuaran MP said Dr Mahathir's defence of the problem was also "clear admission" of his alleged hand in the controversial "Projek IC", a purported initiative to award foreigners Malaysian citizenships in exchange for votes in Sabah, ostensibly to help keep the ruling BN in power.

"He (Dr Mahathir) had been silent all these years while various quarters are providing proof of the indiscriminate issuance of citizenship to foreigners," Bumburing said in a statement here.

He alleged that the country's longest-serving prime minister had banked on "Projek IC" to change Sabah's voter demographics during his tenure, in a bid to stay elected.

"Dr Mahathir is indeed a traitor to the people of Sabah," Bumburing said.

He reminded that at the time of Malaysia's formation in 1963, leaders from Malaya had promised the people of North Borneo, or Sabah and Sarawak, that the sovereignty of both states would be protected.

But following the unchecked influx of foreigners into Sabah from the 1970s, Bumburing said the state's dominion has now been compromised.

A national population census in 2010 showed an exponential 390 per cent increase in Sabah's population from 636,431 citizens in 1970 to 3,120,040 citizens in 2010 — more than double the national population growth of just 164 per cent.

Of the 3.12 million Sabahans today, reports have estimated that 27 per cent are foreigners.

"What Dr Mahathir did was a blatant betrayal to the people of Sabah and Sarawak on that promise," Bumburing said.

In an apparent move to quieten the uproar over the longstanding issue, Dr Mahathir wrote in his blog earlier this week that many migrants in Sabah were qualified to be given Malaysian citizenships as they have stayed in the country for decades and speak Bahasa Malaysia.

"On the basis of length of stay and mastering of the national language, they qualify to be citizens of this country. And so they acquired citizenship.

"By comparison we have many citizens who cannot speak the national language who were accepted as citizens. And we are still giving citizenship to foreigners who wish to be

Malaysians on condition they have been living in this country for 10 out of the last 12 years, speak the national language and take the oath of allegiance to the country.

“So why cannot the migrants to Sabah who have all these qualifications be accepted as citizens? The objections for them being accepted seem to be political,” he said.

Dr Mahathir’s words may have bruised BN badly, particularly as it comes at a crucial time for the once-formidable Sabah BN, which was just hit by the departures of two senior federal lawmakers, including Bumburing.

Bumburing, who was formerly the deputy president of Sabah-based BN party United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO), had left the ruling pact last month to support Pakatan Rakyat (PR), citing his anger over BN’s failure to address Sabah’s problem with illegal immigrants.

He was joined by fellow BN lawmaker Beaufort MP Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin, who was formerly a federal deputy minister and Umno supreme council member.

Both men have launched PR-friendly movements — the Angkatan Pemuda Sabah (APS) for Bumburing and Pakatan Perubahan Sabah (PPS) for Lajim — as their new political platforms for the coming polls.

Their departures have, however, been described by BN leaders as a political move fuelled not by principles but their disgruntlement at being passed over to defend their respective seats.

Just days after their Bumburing and Lajim’s quit move, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak told a press conference that he would announce the terms of reference into the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into Sabah’s illegals issue today, a move described as an attempt at damage control.

But Bumburing, despite acknowledging that the RCI was a key demand of the Sabah electorate, said the panel should be dismissed as an election ploy by BN.

He said Najib should instead apologise to Sabahans for the wrongdoings of his predecessors, particularly Dr Mahathir.

“If indeed the government is truly concerned about the matter, why make announcement on the eve of election?”

“I urge the prime minister not to continuously treat the people in Sabah as naive and stupid.

“The people will not believe this ‘rabbit-from-the-hat’ announcement by him,” he said.

Bumburing added that the only way to resolve Sabah’s illegal immigrant problem was to change the federal government.

He pointed out that PR has promised to turn the issue into its topmost priority in the state, should it come to power in the next polls.

Najib is expected to announce the RCI terms after a closed-door meeting with state Umno and BN leaders here this afternoon.

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