

**IC-for-votes claim focus of Sabah RCI**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**August 11, 2012**  
**By Clara Chooi**

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 11 — The highly-anticipated Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on Sabah's illegal immigrant issue has been given six months to investigate allegations that foreigners have been unlawfully awarded Malaysian identity cards (ICs) and included in the state's electoral roll.

But according to the eight-point terms of reference announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak here today, the panel will not identify the culprit behind the allegedly unlawful award of citizenships to foreigners, recommend any punishment or determine the reasons behind the award.

The opposition has also accused the government, largely former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, of arbitrarily distributing Malaysian ICs to foreigners and registering them as voters in the electoral roll, allegedly to help BN stay in power.

But at a press conference here, Najib said the RCI's formation proves the federal government's commitment to probe Sabah's illegal immigrants problem.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced today an eight-point terms of reference for the royal panel, which he said has already received the consent of the Yang diPertuan Agong.

"The formation of this RCI proves the federal government's commitment to investigate the issues surrounding the presence of illegal immigrants in Sabah.

"The government hopes that Sabahans will benefit from this inquiry and join the government in seeking the best strategy and method to solve the problem," he said in a press conference at Sabah Umno's headquarters here.

The panel's terms are:

1. To investigate the number of foreigners in Sabah given blue Malaysian ICs or citizenships;
2. To investigate if the award of such ICs or citizenships were according to the law;
3. To investigate if those given blue ICs, temporary identification receipts or citizenships through unlawful means have been registered in Sabah's electoral roll;
4. To investigate if the authorities have taken any action or made improvements to standard operating procedures (SOPs), methods and regulations to prevent any irregularities in accordance with the law;
5. To conduct a deeper probe into the SOPs, methods and regulations on the award of blue ICs or citizenships to foreigners in Sabah by taking into consideration international norms and standards that are applicable to Malaysia, and to recommend amendments or changes to improve current practices;

6. To investigate the reasons behind Sabah's population growth according to the following categories:

- a) Sabah citizens residing in the state, including those given blue ICs or citizenships through birth certificates (late registration);
- b) foreign workers (including family members);
- c) illegal immigrants (including family members); and
- d) fugitives

and to study their impact on the number of those registered in the electoral roll;

7. To investigate the social implications on the Sabah community following the award of blue ICs or citizenships to foreigners in the state; and

8) To investigate the number of "stateless" foreigners in Sabah given blue ICs or citizenships.

The five-member panel will be chaired by former Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong and will comprise four commissioners — former Universiti Malaysia Sabah vice-chancellor Datuk Seri Prof Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon, former Sabah Attorney-General Tan Sri Herman J. Luping, Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation deputy chairman and former Kuala Lumpur police chief Datuk Henry Chin Poy-Wu, and former Sabah State Secretary Datuk Kee Mustafa.

Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism Ministry secretary-general Datuk Saripuddin Kasim will act as the panel's secretary.

Najib told the press conference that the panel was formed following repeated demands by BN's Sabah-based component parties to resolve the longstanding problem of illegals in the east Malaysian state.

"This is the request of the Sabah people, presented to me through Sabah BN.

"Our local component parties here have voiced this out to me, saying the time has come for the RCI to be formed," he said.

Najib's announcement today comes amid talk of a brewing revolt among Sabahans against the once-formidable Barisan Nasional (BN), further fuelled by the twin departures of two senior BN lawmakers last month.

Tuaran MP Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing and Beaufort MP Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin, both notable leaders, had left BN to pledge their support for Pakatan Rakyat (PR), citing their frustrations over the government's delay in setting up the RCI.

Just days after the duo left, Najib announced his plan to reveal the RCI terms this afternoon, inviting criticism that the move was a ploy to recoup lost support following Bumburing's and Lajim's twin exits.

The unchecked influx of illegal immigrants into Sabah has been a longstanding problem in the east Malaysian state, often blamed for the rise in social, economic and security problems.

According to replies provided in Parliament last year, Sabah's populace numbered 651,304 in 1970 and grew to 929,299 a decade later. But in the two decades following 1980, the state's population rose significantly by a staggering 1.5 million people, reaching 2,468,246 by 2000.

Media reports said that as of 2010, this number has grown further to 3.12 million, with foreigners making up a sizeable 27 per cent or 889,799 of the population.

Politicians across the divide have been lobbying for the panel's formation, lamenting that the unhealthy spike in the population of foreigners in Sabah would destroy the state's sovereignty.

Hakcipta © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ic-for-votes-claim-focus-of-sabah-rci/>