

Phantom voters a mere perception, says minister
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Yet another issue of national concern has been dismissed as "perception" by a high-ranking official.

This time, it came from Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim, who deemed the existence of phantom voters as merely that, citing the lack of court petitions on the matter as proof.

"There has yet to be a petition in court over phantom voters, so [the existence of phantom voters] is just perception," the Arau MP said in his winding-up speech in Dewan Rakyat today, as reported by fz.com.

He was responding to Sandakan MP Wong Tien Fatt's query on the PMO's position with regard to phantom voters, in view of revelations from the ongoing Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into illegal immigrants in Sabah, that some were given citizenship in exchange for their votes.

"The (idea) of a ghost itself is a perception," Shahidan added.

Another perception, apparently, was the excessive number of ministers under the PMO, which opposition politicians have criticised as unwarranted since there are existing ministries with the same purviews, noting that the PMO has ballooned over the years and particularly under Datuk Seri Najib Razak's premiership.

On the contrary, Shahidan argued, with 87 agencies in the PMO, the present number of ministers is not even enough to look over them.

"I don't think even the opposition leader is aware that there are 87 agencies. The eight ministers cannot possibly take care of all of these agencies. Maybe 15 ministers can handle it better," he said. - July 12, 2013.

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