

Re-register 13 million Malaysian voters for clean roll, RCI told
Malaysian Insider
July 5 , 2013

Re-registrating Malaysia's 13 million voters would ensure a clean electoral roll once and for all, said Sabah Election Commission director Datuk Md Idrus Ismail yesterday.

Conceding that it would be a tedious exercise, he told the the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on illegal immigrants in Sabah that it would involve not only amending the necessary laws but the Constitution as well.

But it was the best solution to address various matters such as deceased voters that were not declared with the National Registration Department and change in voters' address.

"This is not only best for Sabah, but also for the whole country. But it requires the commitment of the EC and the government," he told the inquiry in Kota Kinabalu.

According to Md Idrus, there were over 13 million names in the electoral roll, while there were about three million citizens qualified to vote, but had not registered with the EC, reported Bernama.

To address the issue of stateless children in Sabah, Sabah National Registration Department director Ismail Ahmad proposed a special pass known as the Resident Pass be issued to those children which could be renewed after a certain period of time.

He also said the proposed pass could be extended to foreigners possessing other documents, such as IMM13 issued to Filipino refugees and temporary resident identity cards, to enable them to attend school and seek employment.

"Most of these people have lived here for as long as they can remember and they have become a part of our society and they can be a part of our workforce, too," he explained.

Ismail said although the proposal had been submitted to the state cabinet, it was yet to be implemented.

Meanwhile, the RCI panel was impressed with Philippine-born Rosalinda Ghani's diligence in obtaining her Malaysian citizenship the proper way.

The 51-year-old restaurant owner told the inquiry she came to Sabah without travel documents when she was 14 years old to escape the conflict in southern Philippines. She applied for an IMM13 document from the Immigration Department in Semporna and after 10 years, she applied for an entry permit to allow her to apply for a temporary resident identity card (IC) and later, a permanent resident IC.

She told the inquiry she heard people talk about becoming a Malaysian citizen and took the initiative to find out what the procedures were from the NRD in Semporna.

Rosalinda said last year, she was called to attend an interview at the NRD in Tawau and took an oath before a judge. She was later issued with a certificate of citizenship and was able to apply for a MyKad which was issued to her this year.

The RCI panel, led by former chief judge of Sabah and Sarawak Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong, also comprises University Malaysia Sabah former vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kamaruzzaman Ampon, Kuala Lumpur former police chief Datuk Henry Chin Poy Wu, Sabah former state secretary Datuk KY Mustapha and Sabah former deputy chief minister Tan Sri Herman J Luping, who was also former state attorney-general.

The inquiry continues. - July 5, 2013.

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