

**Indelible ink contract followed Treasury procedures, says EC chief  
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The Election Commission (EC) insisted that it followed Treasury procedures in getting the controversial indelible ink despite the opposition's claims that the supplier is linked to the commission's top officials.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof said a directly-negotiated contract was not unlawful as it was allowed by the Finance Ministry.

"The panel members and I are never involved in administrative matters and procurement, these are handled by the secretariat," he was quoted as saying by The Star today.

"Our officers follow financial procedures as they are aware that they need to obtain a confirmation from the Finance Ministry at all times.

"Although it is a direct negotiation, a written confirmation needs to be obtained from the ministry." Abdul Aziz added.

He also said the initial findings of an internal probe into the controversial ink has been sent to the EC's legal department for an opinion on further action to be taken.

"If there is wrongdoing, those responsible will be punished," he said, stressing that the EC would never do anything that violated laws.

The dispute over the ink erupted after it was found to not be indelible as claimed by the EC.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) had then blamed the EC for being responsible for the issue and dragged Abdul Aziz and his co-chair Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar to the court via a civil suit.

Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli had revealed in Parliament that a businessman alleged to have close ties with EC top officials was behind the ink supply contract.

He named the businessman, one Mohamed Salleh Md Ali, who owned the firm Integrated Challenger Malaysia that supplied the indelible ink for the May 5 general elections.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) had also formed a team to investigate the scandal surrounding the ink, looking into breach of trust in the purchase of the ink.

The EC was also put under more pressure when Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim revealed that food coloring had been used in the ink to replace the deemed silver nitrate, resulting in the ink to be easily removed.

Shahidan had also blamed attempts by voters to wash the ink away as a another reason for the ink to not stay on. - July 20, 2013.

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