

**Sabah RCI will be meaningless if findings ignored, says DAP MP
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BY LEE SHI-IAN**

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into illegal immigrants in Sabah will be another meaningless investigation if the government does not act on its findings, Serdang MP Dr Ong Kian Ming told the five-man panel today.

He said the 2013 electoral rolls is filled with many voters holding suspicious identity cards and a thorough investigation must be conducted into the authenticity of these documents.

"This will be another meaningless RCI if these findings are ignored and the electoral rolls is not cleaned up," he said.

Ong said this showed the Election Commission was not living up to its responsibility of safeguarding the public's confidence.

He explained that applications for Malaysian identity cards were divided into three categories, P1, P2 and P3. The P1 and P2 categories were for applications which could not be processed over the counter. Applications which were not approved and cancelled fell into P3. The identity card numbers issued to the applicants on the temporary receipts were then revoked.

In January, National Registration Department (NRD) Identity Card Division head Ruslan Alias told the RCI that there were 130,549 problematic identity cards.

Ruslan said only 8,553 of the problematic identity cards had been probed, meaning there were still 105,297 which had yet to be investigated.

Ong said that based on a list of the 105,297 P1 and P2 identity card holders, he detected 49,159 of them were on the electoral rolls of the 2013 general election.

In the recently concluded May general election, Dr Ong said 23,179 voters had old identity cards belonging to the P1 list and 25,980 voters were from the P2 list.

He told the five-man RCI panel led by former Sabah and Sarawak Chief Justice Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong that 4.9% of voters in Sabah held P1 and P2 old identity cards.

"Eight out of 10 parliamentary seats with the highest number of P1 and P2 voters are located on the east coast of Sabah," Dr Ong said, adding that 53.9% of such voters were registered between 1990 and 2000.

"This was at the height of the Project IC or Project M activity. Before 1990, there was 20.3% P1 and P2 voters registered, and 12.8% between 2000 and 2010."

A more pertinent fact is that after 2010, 12.9% P1 and P2 voters were on the electoral rolls, Dr Ong said, meaning that the registration of voters with problematic identity cards was still going on.

These are all factors which the government should take into consideration before carrying out a delimitation exercise at the end of the year in Sabah, as flawed electoral rolls with so

many dubious voters can't be used, he said.

Ong also called for Section 9(a) of the Elections Act 1958 to be abolished so that the electoral rolls can be challenged because of what has happened.

He said he was also puzzled that in cases where new identity card numbers were issued to voters along with new dates of birth, in some cases the gender of the individual had also been changed.

Ong, who is the Malaysian Electoral Roll Analysis Project (MERAP) director, also claimed that the issue of problematic identity cards had spilled over to other states in Malaysia, although the majority was in Sabah.

He told the RCI that a mechanism was needed within the NRD to prevent abuse, especially where discretionary identity cards were issued.

"In this age of information technology, the superiors of issuing officers must monitor their actions, especially if a high number of discretionary identity cards have been issued by a small number of people." - July 23, 2013.

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