

**No Identity Card Issued To Foreigners Under "Projek Mahathir", Says Witness
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By Suriati Sidek Ahmad**

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- The National Registration Department (JPN) on Tuesday denied having issued identity cards to foreigners in the state under a project known as "Projek Mahathir" (Mahathir Project).

Its director-general, Datuk Jariah Mohd Said, told the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on illegal immigrants in Sabah that the allegations contained in a book written by MD Mutalib was not true.

"The statements are not true. No identity cards are issued under 'Projek Mahathir', said the 208th witness when questioned by conducting officer Manoj Kurup.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to testify on Wednesday.

Questioned whether she knew about the "Project IC" (IC Project), Jariah, who was appointed JPN director-general in June 2011, said she had heard about it.

She said that based on JPN statistics until Aug 31 this year, a total of 68,703 legal immigrants in the state had been given Malaysian citizenship where 67,675 of them had changed their blue identity cards.

Referring to the book, which stated that 750,000 of the 1.75 million foreigners in the state had forged identity card, Jariah said JPN did not issue forged identity cards to foreigners.

She said applications for the identity card had to be based on provisions in the Federal Constitution, where those found to have provided false information on themselves for the purpose would be investigated and action taken against those responsible for issuing forged identity cards.

"Recently, there was an arrest by the police in Sabah. The police have opened a file on a JPN officer and the officer concerned has been suspended from work," she added.

She said the use of the sworn declaration as substitution for birth certificates for identity card applications in Sabah was valid, but it had been abolished in 1987.

On the testimony by witnesses, comprising foreigners, that they had lied on the information about their place of birth by stating that they were born in Sabah in their application for the identity cards, Jariah suggested that they went to JPN to rectify the matter.

"The information in the JPN record has to be corrected because they are government documents," she added.

She said should they failed to do so within a stipulated period, of one to two years, their citizenship would be withdrawn.

She said she would suggest for the setting up of a task force by JPN to locate them.

On cases of JPN officers and staff involved in issuing identity cards to foreigners through dubious means, Jariah assured that it would not happen again.

She said that between 1979 and 1984, a total of 51,300 problematic identity cards were issued, while between 1984 and 1988, there were 62,550 problematic cards.

"In 1990 to 1996, 16,699 identity cards were cancelled because they were problematic.

"A total of 113,850 applications were received by the special committee on identity cards in Sabah, out of which 8,887 were applications to change the identity card to Mykad and 3,695 of them had been approved," she added.

She said the special committee was set up in 1988 to address cases of problematic identity cards in Sabah, like more than two people sharing the same identity card number, picture on card did not belong to the name of the card holder, etc.

The decision to set up the special committee was made by the Home Ministry and the minister then was Tun Dr Mahathir, she added.

On the overlapping of identity card numbers, she said it involved 639 number and 1,177 card holders.

She said it happened because at that time the identity cards were issued manually, which made it difficult for JPN to detect.

The problem has been addressed with the use of the computer system since 2001, she added.

The hearing before a panel of five commission members, chaired by former Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong, continues Wednesday.

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