

No ICs given to illegals under Project IC, says Sabah DG
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By LEE SHI-IAN

The director-general of the National Registration Department (NRD) today denied claims that identity cards had been issued to illegal immigrants under Project M or Project IC.

She said this today to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into illegal immigrants in Sabah.

Datuk Jariah Mohd Said was asked about the allegations made by former senator Dr Chong Eng Leong that 1.75 million identity cards were issued by the NRD to illegal immigrants in Sabah under Project IC.

"This is not true. No identity cards were issued to illegal immigrants by the NRD under Project IC," Jariah replied.

Project IC was alleged to have been spearheaded by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to make the demographic pattern of Sabah more favorable to the government.

Jariah was asked what would happen if an illegal immigrant went to the NRD and gave false information which the department could not detect. She was asked if the illegal immigrant would be issued an identity card then.

"Yes, under such circumstances, the application would be approved, especially if a testimonial letter was also provided. It is clearly stated under the law the conditions which need to be met before the application of an immigrant is approved," Jariah said, after a short pause.

Asked whether she had ever heard of Project IC or Project M, Jariah replied that she had but didn't know to what extent the project had expanded.

She however confirmed there were many instances where more than one person shared the same identity card number.

"We discovered 639 identity card numbers which were being shared by 1,177 people. This however occurred during the period when everything at the NRD was done manually," said Jariah, adding that the system at the department was computerised in 2003.

"The card numbers of these 1,177 were similar but everything else was different, their names, addresses and pictures. There was a possibility that it may have been a simple error," she told the five-man RCI panel led by former Sabah and Sarawak Chief Justice Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong.

Jariah said when such a scenario unfolded and two people were found to be holding the same identity card number, the department would conduct a thorough check.

If both holders were genuine Malaysians, then a different number would be assigned to one of them.

She disclosed that a special committee was formed by the NRD in 1984 to probe problematic identity cards in Sabah. She said the instruction for the formation of the

committee was given by Dr Mahathir who was then prime minister and home minister.

"When I took over as the department's director-general in June 2011, I asked why had this committee been established. I was told that there were a lot of discrepancies in the process of identity cards being issued in Sabah between 1979 and 1984," Jariah said

"There were false identity cards, identity card numbers with more than one holder, so the committee was investigating these cases. Also, the NRD had introduced the new MyKad with better security features so checks had to be carried out on those changing their old identity cards."

Jariah said the committee had regular meetings until November last year. As the RCI had been established to probe the issue of illegal immigrants in Sabah, she decided there was no need for the committee to hold any more meetings for the time being.

She disclosed that as of August 31 this year, a total of 68,703 foreigners had been given Malaysian citizenship.

On claims that 750,000 immigrants in Sabah were currently holding fake identity cards, Jariah said this had nothing to do with her department as it had not issued these documents. – September 10, 2013.

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