

Former Indonesian polls chief wonders why Malaysia can't get indelible ink right
Malaysian Insider
Sept 20 , 2013
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Using indelible ink during elections is the easiest thing to do, former Indonesian Electoral Commission deputy chairperson Ramlan Surbakti said today during the Bersih People's Tribunal hearing today.

"There is already an international standard. Why is it so difficult for the Election Commission (in Malaysia) to learn from other countries' experience?" he asked after hearing testimony from a chemist.

Ng Eng Joo informed the tribunal that the ink used washed off within hours after it was marked on the voter's finger.

Ng explained to the panellists that the ink failed to work in Malaysia due to its low (1%) content of silver nitrate while its high (60%) content of organic colour only rendered the ink acting as a food colouring

Ramlan said Indonesia had successfully used the indelible ink in its polls.

"To stop confusion among the people, in our country, we open it to the public (for scrutiny). There is an international standard for this," said Ramlan, the deputy chair for the Indonesian body from 2000 to 2004.

Ramlan said bidding to supply the ink was transparent and the formulation of the ink made available for public scrutiny.

He said the indelible ink in Indonesia was purchased after testing it to ensure it complied with Syariah law requirements.

Ramlan said the Indonesian commission tested the ink to ensure it lasted at least three days on voters.

"We even used lime to try and remove the ink, and made sure the ink can't come off."

To which the head of the legal team, Prof Gurdial Singh, replied: "The only problem is that the supplier was not revealed to the public. A committee was set up but no finding has been revealed to the public.

"The country became the butt of a joke when people said you apply the indelible ink and it becomes finger-licking good," said Gurdial.

The tribunal hosted by Bersih 2.0 is into its third day, with witnesses from the opposition, independent observers and indigenous voters having come forth to present their testimonies of electoral fraud and irregularities committed by the Barisan Nasional government.

The ruling BN and the EC have brushed the tribunal aside. - September 20, 2013.

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