

Bersih not under RoS, so no cooperation from EC
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EC chairman Mohd Hashim Abdullah also denies allegations that the country is afflicted by problems of phantom voters and gerrymandering.

PETALING JAYA: The Election Commission (EC) will not cooperate with Bersih 2.0 to monitor and ensure that the 14th general election (GE14) is held in a fair manner.

Its chairman Mohd Hashim Abdullah was quoted by Oriental Daily as saying that the organisation was registered with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM) and not the Registrar of Societies (RoS).

“The EC will only work with non-governmental organisations (registered with the RoS),” he reportedly said yesterday.

He said the EC was cooperating with many NGOs and accepting applications for volunteers to help monitor the voting process.

He added that he believed the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) and opposition parties would also assign representatives to monitor the polling stations.

Bersih recently accused the EC of making the electoral roll worse instead of clearing it up by refusing to give copies of the draft supplementary roll for the first quarter of this year.

The electoral watchdog claimed the move, which it said would favour the ruling party, was nothing short of sabotage.

On May 16, its chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah handed a memorandum to the EC for reforms in the electoral system to be implemented in GE14, and also sought a meeting with Hashim on Bersih’s concerns.

However, Hashim maintained that the decision not to make public the roll of new voters did not violate any law as there was no regulation requiring the EC to do so.

He said the EC’s regular announcement on new voters was a discretionary “bonus”.

Hashim also denied that the country was afflicted by problems of phantom voters and gerrymandering.

He said there had been a misunderstanding as many people were over-sensitive towards the presence of foreign migrants.

“The allegation that there are buses conveying large numbers of foreigners (for polling) is not true. The fact is, there are buses transporting foreign workers to their workplaces every day in urban areas,” he said.

“In the 13th general election (in May 2013), there was an allegation that 14,000 Bangladeshis were being brought into Malaysia to vote for BN.

“As it turned out, the EC did not receive a single official report on this after the election,” he said.

Hashim also said he hoped the transportation of ballot boxes would be done soon to make it more convenient for voters in remote interior areas and senior citizens who have difficulty travelling to fulfil their voting obligations.

He said the issue would be discussed with parties from the government and the opposition after a working paper on the matter is prepared. He expressed hope that the parties would support the proposals in the paper.

The EC is also preparing transportation for voters travelling to cast their ballots in the interior areas, especially in Sabah and Sarawak, he said.

He added that the EC would continue the use of indelible ink for GE14 while increasing the number of polling centres.

He also said politicians from either side of the divide should not blame gerrymandering when they lose and praise themselves when they win.

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