



EVEN though the polling for 10th Sarawak state elections on Apr 16th is over, the entire election cycle is only going through its post-election cycle at this point, where complaints and reviews of the elections administration are underway. This is an essential stage of the election as any elections found to be lacking credibility do not deserve to have its results accepted and recognized.

This is the context of the deportation of me by the Sarawak state government the day before on May 24th, where it seems that some parties are trying hard to continue suppressing criticism of the unfair election process to legitimize the renewal of their mandate. It can be argued that any parties which uphold democracy will welcome criticisms with an open mind – and conversely those parties which attempt to suppress criticisms on their own conduct stand accused of sidelining democratic practices, thus undermining their own claim that they won the election by popular support!

So: what are the criticisms that has been raised by MEO-Net and other observers? The criticisms that MEO-Net had raised about the 10th state elections in Sarawak has been outlined in its preliminary report of the state elections published on Apr 17th in Kuching. Broadly

MEO-Net took strong exception to the low enfranchisement, abuse of civil servants in the election campaign, abuse of government machineries and rampant vote buying facilitated by Long House chiefs (Tuai Rumah). While direct evidences are hard to come by, most voters surveyed by MEO-Net observers do strongly believe that vote buying was rampant.

On MEO-Net's side our observers managed to collect some damning evidences on vote buying, threats to voter and abuses of government resources for campaigning, which, if investigated on its full extent, are likely to nullify the results of the 10th Sarawak state elections. The evidences only surfaced after MEO-Net went around Sarawak's interior after the polling day to visit majority of the Sarawak's constituencies where there are little or no phone/internet connections. The majority of the constituencies ie over three-quarters are located in the interior. These are areas where the media coverage of the election campaign had neglected and this was where frauds and irregularities were rampant.

So: what are the evidence?

1. A long house chief (Tuai Rumah) of N52 Tamin constituency admitted on video that he received 3 checks amounting to RM10,000.00 on Apr 13th from a named assistant of the BN candidate for N52 Tamin constituency. He cashed RM5000 from 2 checks – but the 3rd check of RM5000.00 bounced. He alleged that 14 voters in his long house were given RM50.00 each by the same person to induce them to vote for the BN candidate. Consequently, by admission of the same person, all of the voters in the long house did vote for the candidate. A video of the admission has since been posted on You Tube;

2. Another voter from Rumah Badang admitted on video that he received RM20.00 from a named agent of the BN candidate in N57 Belaga. He alleged that all voters in Sg Asap were similarly given the money. Belaga voters overwhelmingly returned the BN candidate;

3. A voter from Rumah Nyaweng, Sg Asap in the N57 Belaga constituency admitted on video that she was threatened by a named kindergarten teacher working in her long house, that if she voted for the Opposition her son would not be considered for a teacher training application and that her other kids receiving welfare aid under E-Kasih program of the state government would be denied the aid!

4. A voter from Rumah Lahanan said on video that the voters in Sg Asap accepted the compensation payment for their old house which made way for the Bakun Dam construction, within 3 days of polling on Apr 16th 2011 because they had waited over 10 years for the payment and that they were afraid that they may miss the compensation if they did not sign to receive them then. Actually they only received the payment in check and that only half of the house payment was given to them to pressure the voters to ensure victory for the BN candidate so that they get to collect the 2nd half of the house compensation later. The violations involved abuses of public fund and government department for party campaign purposes.

5. A named BN candidate was seen giving RM300.00 to the son of the Rumah Nyaweng Long House Chief on the eve of polling to induce him to vote for BN candidate in N57 Belaga constituency. There are 3 named witnesses to this happening which took place in public. The son of the Long House Chief was witnessed to be rejecting and returning the money to the

giver.

6. In N52 Tamin constituency MEO-Net observers obtained a video showing the money cashed by a Long House Chief of Rumah Unban Anak Endu (Tenting Terentang, Nanga Selangau, Ulu Mukah 96000, Sibü) being distributed openly, on Apr 14, around 8.40pm, in the verandah (Ruai) of the long house. The Long House Chief distributed RM50.00 only to those long house residents whom he think supported BN. There are 105 voters in the long house. Earlier many long house chiefs in the area were summoned to BN's office in Selangau town to be given the checks by 3 named assistants to the BN candidate, for distribution to the voters in their respective long house.

7. About 100 Ibans from Rassau and Bawang Assan gathered around a SUPP party office in N47 Bawang Assan constituency to demand the balance payment of RM400.00 for each voters promised by the Long House Chief in their area. The Long House Chief, as reported by MEO-Net's observer through interview with the voter, refused to make the payment on the ground that these Ibans voter voted for the Opposition candidate. These voters were, along all others, given RM100.00 each prior to the polling.

The evidences above are but the tip of an iceberg. If the authorities bother to investigate them to the full extent eg by checking the bank accounts of all Long House Chiefs, their JKKK accounts as well as the bank accounts of the candidates involved in the elections, MEO-Net is confident that there are many more cases than the ones found here. It is inconceivable that with such rampant corruptions, if confirmed, that the election results can pass the scrutiny of any objective election observer!

It seems that more evidences can surface if there are more support given to the evidence suppliers, more observers bother to contact the interior voters, and that the voters are given more voter education that voting influenced by monetary or other inducements are invalid and unacceptable by any standards of fair election - including the Election Offenses Act of Malaysia!

While the position of the EC has been to leave the prosecution of these cases to the MACC it is known that there are MACC officers who publicly said that they refuse to investigate these cases on the ground that they only enforce the Anti-Corruption Act. While the perpetrators of the above corruption may feel secured that there would not be any prosecution by the current government they do suffer from the condemnation by the court of public opinions and in the cyber world. That may, most likely be the cause behind the politically motivated deportation of myself as well as the other six persons during the election period.

MEO-Net will consult lawyers with a view to mount a challenge to the deportation order by the Sarawak Immigration Department.

All the results of MEO-Net's observation of the 10th Sarawak State Elections will be published

after the election petitions are dealt with within six months of the gazetting of the election result. If the report is welcome with an open mind it can help, over time, improve the electoral administration in the country and help improve the legitimacy and credibility of the elected governments.

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MEO-Net was formed in 2009 to link up civil society groups who are involved in election observation, voter education and election training. Currently it has 6 network members: MEW, MALVU, NIEI, SAFREL, SEW and KOMAS.

