

EC's locality correction within its jurisdiction

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by Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani

KUALA LUMPUR: The Election Commission said yesterday it was not "correcting boundaries" but "correcting locality on the ground".

EC deputy chairman Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar (pic) said correction of locality had been a common practice by the electoral body but that the exercise was put on hold, last year.

"Correction of locality means the Electoral Index or names in the electoral roll according to a locality which a voter registered in a polling district on the ground," he told The Malay Mail.

"I don't remember saying 'boundary correction'. We're not shifting any voters but we want to ensure that locality of the voters is put at the right location on the ground and the correct polling district."

Wan Ahmad said the correction was part of an exercise to review localities by utilising the Electronic-Geographical Information System (E-GIS) which detects potential geographical hindrance to drawing borders such as rivers and mountains.

Yesterday, the Bar Council's constitutional law committee chief, Syahredzan Johan, pointed out that if voters were moved to a different constituency, that would amount to a delimitation exercise which is against its jurisdiction set in the Election Act 1958.

Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim was one of the residents affected by the decision.

Wan Ahmad, however, was adamant that no voters were moved. He reasoned that affected residents had been voting in the wrong district and that the EC was merely correcting a mistake.

"The MB's residence is registered at Jalan 16/2; that particular stretch falls under the Kawasan Universiti polling district which is under Lembah Pantai. We noticed the mistake by our registration clerk and decided to correct his locality.

"The MB had been voting in the wrong constituency," he said.

He also pointed out that the exercise was placed on hold following the Hulu Selangor by-election in 2010 where 228 voters had been re-registered under the correct Selayang constituency.

"We have been conducting correction of localities since 2009 but decided to stop after the Opposition decided to politicise it during the Hulu Selangor by-election.

"In January, 2011, the EC decided to conduct the correcting locality process together with the boundary delineation exercise after the 13th general election. So why are they only bringing this up now?"

Wan Ahmad, however, admitted that the EC should have informed voters of the correction.

"The state director thought the exercise was ongoing and residents would find out when they check their electoral roll. It was an oversight but what EC did was according to the law and we have not shifted any votes, localities or boundaries.

"Those are just misconceptions," he said.