

Danger in creating 'biased' election body: Somchai

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THE National Legislative Assembly (NLA) vote to reconstitute the Election Commission (EC) would be a stigma on Thai politics if the National Council for Peace and Order acts with an agenda that results in certain political parties winning or losing in the upcoming election, Election Commissioner Somchai Srisutthiyakorn said yesterday.

He compared voting on the organic bill on Friday with the attempt to push through the amnesty bill by a majority in the House by the previous government.

"It would not be a problem if the NCPO remained impartial, and stuck to its task of preventing a crisis in the country," Somchai posted on his Facebook.

Somchai cast doubts about the bipartisan nature of the new EC, as the members would be chosen by a junta-appointed selection panel and the NLA.

He called on the public to be prepared for this fact, which he said was "the dark side" of the political and election reform.

EC chairman Supachai Somcharoen said yesterday there was no use protesting over the reset of the EC after the majority vote for the change by the National Legislative Assembly.

The EC, he said, would adhere to the law, and would continue working until the new commissioners enter the office.

"I'm not surprised, because I have made up my mind to some extent. They have a reason - they want to have new people to work on [overseeing elections].

'They don't want us to do this job'

"As they don't want us to do this job, I can go home, and that's it." Supachai said he would have time to rest once the new team was on board.

Meanwhile, a Suan Dusit Poll of 1,265 respondents from June 6 to 9 found that around 49 per cent of the people agreed to the reconstitution of the EC.

About 42 per cent said only some EC members who did not meet the new qualifications

should vacate their posts, while only three per cent said all the current EC members should remain in office.

Nearly 44 per cent said they were concerned the EC resetting could delay the election, while 34 per cent said they were not sure about this.

Bangkok Poll also conducted a survey on people's views on the EC probe into the qualifications of nine ministers.

The poll, conducted on 1,237 respondents, showed that 37 per cent believed this to be a political game between the agency and the government, while 29.5 per cent said it was the EC's responsibility.

About 66 per cent said the EC was right to make the move, while around 24 per cent said the Commission did not have the right to do so.

Around 39 per cent said they were not confident that the agency would probe ministers with impartiality, while 18 per cent trusted the agency's impartiality.

About 56 per cent said the case would not affect the government.