

# PM's reply to memo

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.** — The Auditor-General, Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin Haji Zakaria, has gone "beyond his terms of reference" over the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) loans scandal report, the Prime Minister said today.

In a strongly-worded reply to the Auditor-General's memorandum, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad criticised Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin for breaching the boundaries of his authority as chairman of the BMF

inquiry committee by:

- Publicising his work on the report and making pronouncements on it;
- Consulting a Queen's Counsel (Q.C.) over the report and then announcing that it would not breach the Banking Act; and,
- Openly stating his opinion on

- FULL TEXT OF PM'S LETTER TO TAN SRI AHMAD NOORDIN
- WHY PM HAD TO MAKE PUBLIC HIS REPLY
- BAR COUNCIL TO DECIDE WHETHER TO HELP LAWYERS

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whether the report should be made public.

He also warned Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin that Bank Bumiputra could sue him if its creditworthiness or credibility was affected as a result of his publishing the report.

Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin today declined to comment on the reply from the Prime Minister to his memorandum.

Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin said this evening: "I don't want to say anything and I am not even bound to explain why. As far as I am concerned the memo was my last letter to the Prime Minister and I am not even going to send a reply to his letter."

Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin confirmed receiving the Prime Minister's letter this morning.

The four-and-a-half page reply from the Prime Minister also questioned the fairness of the Committee of Inquiry, headed by Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin, in compiling its report on the BMF loans scandal. The other members of the committee were lawyer Chooi Mun Sou and accountant Ramli Ibrahim. Encik Ramli did not sign the memorandum.

Dr Mahathir said that some people named in the report had not been interviewed for their side of the story by Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin, even though they would have "willingly submitted to being interviewed by you."

This had resulted in the creation of suspicion about those named and what was worse was that they could not clear themselves, he said.

Dr Mahathir said: "It is elementary justice that people must be allowed to give their side of the story.

"Even if they can clear themselves later, much damage would have been done to their reputation."

He said the Auditor-General did not care about "what happens to others so long as you satisfy your righteousness."

Dr Mahathir said that despite the limitations in the terms of appointment of the committee members, Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin was still able to gather information which had successfully

# Publish at your own risk, says Mahathir

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that the Auditor-General had made proposals to assist the government.

"Beyond asking that you be allowed to make public the report unconditionally, you have not proposed anything that can be regarded as being of assistance to the government," the letter added.

On Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin's explanation that the memorandum is an initiative to open up direct communication with the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir said: "I wonder when direct communication was closed. I am not aware that I have refused to receive communication from you."

Dr Mahathir thanked the committee for its

work and said the government will publish the report if after studying all the legal implications it is satisfied that it is reasonably safe to do so.

"The government will not seek popularity through irresponsible actions. The conscience of the government is quite clear," he added.

*Bernama adds:* A spokesman of the Prime Minister's Department said Dr Mahathir had no intention of making public his reply to Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin until the Auditor-General released the memorandum to the Press.

He pointed out that the memorandum was hand-delivered to the Prime Minister's Department in a sealed letter marked

"Sulit dan Persendirian" (confidential and personal).

This could imply that the memorandum should not be made public, he said.

Contacted at his home yesterday evening, Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin declined to comment on the reply from the Prime Minister.

"I don't want to say anything and I am not even bound to explain why. As far as I am concerned, the memo was my last letter to the Prime Minister and I am not even going to send a reply to his letter," he added.

Mr Chooi said he did not want to comment as he had not read the Prime Minister's letter.