

29 JAN 1999

Ibrahim-Commission

AS TO WHOM REPORT SHOULD BE HANDED SHOULD NOT BE MADE AN ISSUE

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- The question as to whom the report should be submitted by the commission of inquiry, set up to probe Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's injuries, should not be made an issue, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ibrahim Ali said today.

He criticised the DAP and Non-Governmental Organisations for insisting that the commission should hand over the report to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and not to the Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah as announced earlier.

Describing the DAP's call as a political gimmick, Ibrahim said the people should place their full confidence in the commission which among other things would establish the identify of the person or persons who caused the injuries to Anwar while he was in police custody.

The commission of inquiry announced by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad three days ago comprises former Chief Justice of Malaya Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin, former Court of Appeal Judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar and orthopaedic surgeon Yeoh Poh Hong. Former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman will conduct the investigations.

Yesterday Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang, Aliran President P.Ramakrishnan and Legal Adviser to the Consumer Association of Penang (CPA) Meenakshi Raman questioned the Prime Minister's statement that the commission would submit its report to the Attorney-General for further action.

Proposing that the commission hand over the report direct to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Lim also felt that Mohtar should not be involved in the probe.

Ibrahim accused Lim of not being sincere and that he was seeking political mileage by raising the issue.

Replying to a question, Ibrahim, who has the portfolio of legal affairs, said he did not know when the Yang di-Pertuan Agong would hand over the appointment letters to the commission members.

He was however certain that it would be soon.

Meanwhile, the Bar Council and Member of Parliament for Jelutong Karpal Singh have asked for the inquiry to be open to the public to "fully meet public expectations".

Bar Council president Datuk Dr Cyrus V Das also said that the findings and recommendations of the Commission should be made public at the end of the inquiry.

The terms of reference should ensure that the Commission was empowered to identify the persons responsible for inflicting the injuries on Anwar and those who aided and abetted in the act, and to generally make recommendations against the recurrence of any form of custodial violence, he said in a statement today.

Das said the Commission should also take this opportunity to make strong recommendations against such violence and provide suitable guidelines against it.

Among other things, he said, the guidelines should provide for matters such as the need to record time, place of arrest and venue of custody of the detainee, and that the police personnel carrying out the interrogation should wear name tags and be visibly identifiable by the detainee.

Karpal, in a separate statement, said that the Commission should act without fear or favour.

He said in this case, it was more than likely that the police personnel involved in the act were high-ranking police personalities as "no low-ranking police officer would have had the temerity to assault a former deputy prime minister".

Karpal also said that the Cabinet had taken a step in the right direction by giving the Commission 14 days to complete its investigations as, in the public interest, those responsible should be brought to book without delay.

-- BERNAMA

RA AHH AAM