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## Call for thorough and fair probe into alleged assault by police

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Political parties from the Government and opposition, the Bar Council and individuals today questioned the Attorney-General's statement on the investigation into the alleged assault by the police on Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

They urged the Government to set up an independent inquiry to ensure that a thorough and fair investigation had been carried out to establish the truth and bring to book those responsible for the crime.

Gerakan deputy secretary-general Dr Tan Chee Kwong said the statement by Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah was unacceptable as there was no indication as to who was responsible for the injuries on Anwar.

He said there was also no explanation as to how Anwar had suffered injuries while in police custody.

Dr Tan was commenting on the statement by Mohtar yesterday that he had ordered a deeper investigation into the alleged assault, as the report submitted by the special investigation team was not conclusive.

Mohtar said he was of the opinion that police officers had caused some of the injuries suffered by Anwar while he was in their custody.

He ordered the special team to interview nine senior officers including the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor and his deputy Tan Sri Norian Mai.

Mohtar also instructed the special team to record statements from the doctors whose reports contained inconsistencies on several important aspects.

"Gerakan strongly feels that this is not acceptable. It is most disappointed and baffled by Mohtar's statement," Dr Tan said.

He said Gerakan was of the opinion that an investigation team headed by a retired high court judge be set up to investigate the matter.

He said Gerakan hoped the investigation would be completed as soon as possible to restore public confidence in the police which had sunk to a low level after Anwar appeared in court with a black eye.

Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, said the A-G's statement on her husband's injuries was disappointing as after almost four months, it has still not been seriously investigated.

Reading a joint statement issued by her and Anwar to reporters outside the Federal Court building at the end of the hearing of the Anwar case this afternoon, she urged the A-G to put in greater effort to ensure:

\* That the persons directly responsible for the assault on Anwar including Abdul Rahim, the IGP, should uphold the sovereignty of the law and tell the truth; and,

\* (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the Home Minister, who has followed the development on Sept 20, 1998, closely, should admit the assault and be responsible.

"Moreover Abdul Rahim, who is responsible (in his capacity as the IGP) for that night's incident, has not even been questioned," she said.

The Bar Council expressed its regret that the police investigation into the incident was not yet fully completed.

Its president, Datuk Dr Cyrus Das, said in a statement that the council viewed with grave concern the result or the conclusion made in the statement by Mohtar on the injuries suffered by Anwar.

He reiterated the resolution adopted by the Malaysian Bar on Oct 10 last year that called for the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry over

the incident.

"The Bar Council also calls upon the A-G to direct the special investigation team to speedily complete its task and to institute prosecution against those identified to have caused the injuries or abetted the same," he said.

The three former DAP officials who were removed from the respective positions by the party last year also urged the Home Minister to set up an independent panel to investigate the alleged police brutality on Anwar.

The three - former DAP vice-chairman Liew Ah Kim, former national treasurer Fung Ket Wing and former national publicity secretary Wee Choo Keong - said in a statement that the panel could be headed by a former judge.

"We find it difficult to understand how Assistant Commissioner Mat Zain Ibrahim (the head of the Special Investigation Team) could submit the investigation papers to the A-G with no findings of person or persons responsible for the alleged injuries.

"One would have thought that in such an investigation, the prime objective would be to look for evidence of person or persons who have committed the alleged crime," they said.

They said Mohtar's revelation that some of the injuries on Anwar were caused by police officers, gave more reasons for an independent panel to investigate the matter.

"Under the principles of transparency and natural justice, no police officer should be involved in the investigations. Otherwise, there will always be allegations of unfair investigations and acts of cover-up," they said.

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang described Mohtar's statement as "long overdue but scandalous".

He said it was scandalous because the investigation had not identified the person responsible for the injury.

"We have a heinous crime without criminals happening in the very top-security precincts of the national police headquarters in Bukit Aman where nobody could have access but those with the highest and most sensitive security clearance," he said.

He said it was an accountability scandal of the first order because despite a month-long investigation by the special team, the A-G had to take over six weeks to announce that police investigations were not complete.

Lim questioned why Mohtar, who was given the findings of the special team on Nov 19, waited for six weeks before ordering the special team to record statements from the nine senior officers.

"The first question that comes to mind is why wasn't a statement recorded from Abdul Rahim in the first place when he should take full responsibility not only for what happened in the police force, but for what happened at the police high command at Bukit Aman.

"At the very least, Mohtar's statement has established that the police high command had abetted in the assaults on Anwar whether by omission or commission.

"Is the A-G prepared to indict the police high command for the offence?"

Parti Rakyat Malaysia president Syed Husin Ali called on the Government to make public the report on Anwar's injuries.

"Of course, we have never been satisfied with the set-up and make-up of this inquiry and have always demanded a truly independent body to fully investigate this incident.

"We reiterate our call for such an independent inquiry," Syed Husin said.

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