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Documents

SOME TREASURY FILES MAY INDEED BE MISSING, SAYS MUSTAPA

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said he does not discount that some confidential Treasury documents are indeed missing.

However, he said, it was up to the police and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali to determine that.

"The probe has yet to begin but I'm sure the KSN (Abdul Halim) will give the order soon," he told reporters here today.

He was approached about Finance Ministry documents being among government confidential files stashed abroad by jailed former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar's former political secretary Mohamad Ezam Mohamed Nor disclosed at a political rally in Perak last week that Anwar had kept confidential government documents overseas.

Mohamad Ezam is presently youth wing chief of Keadilan (national justice party) led by Anwar's wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Mustapa said government officers found to be involved in removing the confidential documents abroad are liable for prosecution under the Official Secrets Act.

Mohamad Ezam had said that Anwar and his supporters had stashed five to six boxes of government documents abroad and would expose them one by one to the people.

Anwar was expelled as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2 last year and from Umno the next day.

In IPOH, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said exposing the documents to the public, as according to Keadilan's expressed intention, was not the proper way to check alleged domestic malpractices.

Speaking to reporters Ramli said resorting to such tactic, on the pretext of seeking justice, would do more harm to national security.

Ramli said by doing so Keadilan would only encourage government servants to smuggle out confidential official documents for selfish and commercial motives.

"Consequently national security is compromised and efficiency of the civil service undermined," he said.

To deter future stashing of official files abroad, Ramli called for stern action against those responsible once investigations confirmed their complicity.

In ALOR SETAR, PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor proposed that a special inquiry panel comprising senior police officers be set up to investigate Mohamed Ezam's disclosure.

Fadzil said the proposed panel should investigate whether the documents could implicate government leaders in possible malpractices.

"The government must be transparent and let the people know," he told reporters after attending a State Legislative Assembly sitting today.

Fadzil added that it would suffice to have such a panel as a police report relating to Mohamed Ezam's disclosure had already been lodged.

Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali said here that Ezam was believed to be trying to divert the attention of the people from Anwar's moral issue to that of the six boxes of government documents stashed overseas.

He said that Ezam was also believed to be trying to cause a rift between politicians and government officers by alleging that some

government officers were supplying the documents.

"The real issue of the sacking of Anwar is not that he has kept documents, not that he is not efficient in his work but that of his morals," he told reporters after launching a National Day logo exhibition at The Mall.

Tajol Rosli, who is a member of the Umno supreme council, said that before the government conducts an investigation on the officers allegedly involved, the government should ensure that such documents were really kept abroad.

"The differences between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Anwar is that when the country faced economic crisis, Dr Mahathir did not wish to seek IMF's help whereas Anwar wanted to ask for help from the IMF and foreign countries to overcome the problem," he said.

Tajol Rosli felt that distracting the people from the domestic problems may also be a strategy of Keadilan to win the coming general election.

"We ourselves do not know what are in the boxes and to investigate the officers without knowing what are in the boxes, we will end up having problems with the government officers," he said.

The minister however said that most of the government officers were responsible, honest and trustworthy.

Tajol Rosli said that the police should summon Ezam to verify his statement before conducting any investigation on government officers.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob also said here that the official government documents said to be stashed overseas may not contain anything kept secret from the people.

"I don't think there are things we have kept secret because decisions we made are known by the people but surely discussions on the pros and cons must also be informed.

"There is nothing to hide. All are transparent. Except if there are people who purposely want to make it an issue. I don't see any tendency in the government to hide anything because we just cannot hide them," he said.

Megat Junid said that if there were abuses, all quarters would be affected because the enforcement of certain matters affects all quarters, from the officers at the lower rung to the ministers.

"The Cabinet is not just one individual. All the ministers are from various parties and various races. The Cabinet decisions will go to the government officers. I don't see how we can hide things," he said.

-- BERNAMA