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ACA never directed to close case

reports on "Dewan Rakyat" by Ainon Mohd; Brenda Lim
PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad never directed the Anti-Corruption Agency to close its case or stop investigating former Economic Planning Unit director-general Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman, the Dewan Rakyat heard yesterday.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Douglas Unggah Embas said investigations continued even after Datuk Ahmad Zaki Husin took over as ACA director-general from Datuk Shafee Yahaya.

He said this when commenting on points raised by Abdul Rahman Yusof (Keadilan-Kemaman) in his speech.

Douglas said the fact that the ACA had continued with investigations showed that the case has not been closed as alleged by some.

"Therefore, the allegation that Dr Mahathir had abused his power to cover up corruption and interfere with the due process of the law is very irresponsible."

Douglas said several people had made police reports on the statement made by Shafee in court.

"The police are still conducting investigations into the report. Therefore, any discussion regarding this matter will be subjudice."

He said the integrity and independence of the agency were proven as it had investigated prominent leaders in Government at both State and Federal-levels.

This had resulted in those involved in corruption being charged in court and sentenced accordingly.

"The independence of the agency when carrying out its duties has not been affected due to criticism, reminders or advice from any party including the Prime Minister himself."

Douglas said Dr Mahathir had reminded the agency to be more careful and practice professionalism as investigations may sometime be sensitive.

There may be instances where issues may be politicised by some parties which have their own agenda, he added.

In his speech, Abdul Rahman had deliberated on the functions of the agency.

He said the agency, a body established to address and curb corruption, must carry out its duties with honour, justice and without prejudice according to the law and regulations.

Abdul Rahman questioned the independence of the agency when carrying out investigations.

Douglas said the ACA was still an independent agency which will investigate anyone according to powers invested in it and which were contained in the ACA Act 1997.

"As an enforcement agency established to address corrupt practices, the ACA will not take drastic action when carrying out its duties. Investigations will be done thoroughly and professionally."

As for cases which involved the public, the agency could only reveal certain facts allowed under the law.

Findings from investigations would be referred to the Attorney-General on the question of prosecution, he added.

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