

Stop greasing palms, group tells companies

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PETALING JAYA: Anti-graft watchdog group Transparency International Malaysia (TIM) wants the private sector to play a more active role in wiping out corruption.

Its president Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim said private firms tend to think it was necessary to bribe civil servants to get things done.

This misconception and the lack of support from the private sector had hindered anti-corruption enforcement work by the Anti-Corruption Agency, he said.

"Many companies believe that supporting our work would lose them a government contract or two, and many openly argue that facilitation payments make the wheels of government turn smoothly," said Tunku Abdul Aziz.

The private sector must realise that it was feeding corruption, instead of rightfully starving it, by handing out "facilitation fees" in order to get what it wanted, he said.

He added that many companies griped about corruption but balked when asked to support TIM's work and projects on anti-corruption and good governance.

"They just gripe and complain. I've told some of them that they are merely opportunists whose mission in life appears to be on the constant look out for loopholes in the law - to see how far they can go without being arrested," he said.

He said the private sector also perceived TIM as being anti-government and that the authorities were against non-governmental organisations and were being selective in

approving and endorsing them.

Tunku Abdul Aziz added that this misconception remained within the private sector regardless of TIM's constant explanation it was anti-corruption and not anti-government.

"The Government is fighting corruption and sees TIM as a partner. But it's still difficult to convince the private sector.

"I sometimes joke that they would only believe it if I am able to produce a picture of myself sitting on the prime minister's lap," said Tunku Abdul Aziz.

He said the presence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at TIM's recent National Integrity Medal Awards ceremony was an endorsement of the Government's support of the organisation and its anti-corruption activities.