

**Set up judicial commission, CJ told
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The Chief Justice's comments on how judges should behave is an indication that an independent judicial commission on the appointment and promotion of judges is necessary according to DAP chairperson and lawyer Karpal Singh.

Karpal who is also Bukit Glugor MP said in a statement that such a commission was necessary in the public interest.

"There are countries in the Commonwealth which have set up such commissions and there is no reason why the government should not aspire towards transparency and set up the commission in the public interest before the judiciary begins to crumble," he said.

Karpal was responding to the public revelations made by Chief Justice Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim who on Thursday said that judges who behaved inappropriately should step down.

The nation's top judge said there could be no justice and fair play if a judicial officer was temperamental, always showy, associated with parties who appeared before him or accepted bribes.

"So it is better for such judges, who cannot shed such bad characteristics to step down," he was quoted as saying.

Before this, Ahmad Fairuz likened the proposal for the independent judicial commission to 'nudity' rather than transparency.

"Transparency should have its limits. Don't tell me when we are transparent, we have to be nude. That is not transparency, that's nudity.

"You want everything to be absolute? There is no such thing as absolute freedom or absolute transparency. That's the way I look at things," Fairuz said.

Karpal also urged the CJ to name the errant judges and if found guilty, they should be relieved of their posts.

Bad judges

Ahmad Fairuz's view on inappropriately behaved judges illicit comments from other lawyers including Edmund Bon who suggested that the CJ should act against the guilty persons.

According to Bon, Ahmad Fairuz appears to have suggested that he had received complaints or had evidence of such misconduct had received complaints.

"His statement in the press was very general and we don't know who he was referring to. Such a statement will affect the innocent judges," he reportedly said.

Echoing similar sentiments, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers Param Cumaraswamy, questioned if there was evidence that some judges were behaving inappropriately.

"If that is the case, why has there been no action taken? Such sweeping statements may not be fair to the good and honest judges," he was quoted saying in the Star.

However, retired Federal Court judge Azmi Kamaruddin supported Ahmad Fairuz's statement and noted that during his time, judges were advised to use their discretion and not socialise 'too much'.

"If one likes singing and dancing, then he should not become a judge as there is a need to continue to upkeep the good name of the judiciary," he said.

Retired Court of Appeal judge Shaik Daud Ismail said the reminder was timely but stressed that such revelations did not mean that judges who socialised with lawyers, prosecutors and corporate figures were corrupt.

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