

Top cop asks Johari: What weaknesses?
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Beh Lih Yi

Federal CID director Christopher Wan Soo Kee appeared to be taken aback by the claim that poor police investigations had led to the release of criminal suspects held under the Emergency Ordinance (EO).

"What weaknesses do we have?" he retorted when the question was posed to him after a book launch at the Bukit Aman federal police headquarters today.

He was asked to respond to Deputy Internal Security Minister Mohd Johari Baharum's allegation that improper investigations by the police had led the suspects to walk free.

Johari said this when defending himself in the wake of an allegation that he had released several EO detainees after receiving bribes amounting to RM5.5 million.

"If there is anything (weaknesses), the (internal security) ministry will get back to us [...] We (the police) are under the ministry, so if there is anything, we shall wait for the ministry to inform us," said Wan.

On the same note, the CID director said the police will look into the criticisms but urged the public not to jump to conclusions.

However, he declined to comment on the cases involving the freed detainees.

Not following procedure

The 'freedom for sale' allegation against Johari first surfaced on the Internet - in a page hosted by free website, Freewebs.com.

It accused the minister of freeing suspects linked to gangsterism and vice activities after receiving the payment. One of those released is said to be the younger brother of another deputy minister.

Wan said the commercial crime division is looking into the origins of the website and the persons responsible for it.

At a press conference yesterday, Johari denied the allegation and also accused the police of inaction and not following the 'standard operating procedure'.

The deputy minister has wide powers under the EO - a preventive law similar to the Internal Security Act - to order for suspects to be detained for two years without trial. The minister's decision cannot be challenged in court.

The EO has been used over the years to detain or restrict the movement of suspected gang members and criminals - most of whom the police find difficult to bring to justice due to lack of evidence.

This scandal comes hot on the heels of graft allegations against the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor.

Internal probe

Meanwhile, deputy police chief Mohd Najib Abdul Aziz, when met at the same venue, also declined to elaborate on the investigation against Johari.

He said the case is being investigated by the ACA while the police will conduct an internal probe to ascertain if the release of the detainees was due to incompetency on their part.

Despite being pressed for details, Najib declined to comment further on the probe of identify the three criminal suspects mentioned in the allegation.

The trio were named in the website. Two of them were said to be triad bosses from Perak while the other was detained in connection with illegal gaming and book-keeping in Sabah.

However, a news report quoted police chief Musa Hassan, who is currently on a working visit to Indonesia, as confirming that the three were released.

He also said the police are investigating if there were more suspects freed from EO detention under suspicious circumstances.

The deputy IGP also declined to comment on the status of the investigation on Zulkipli (right).

Zulkipli, a former high-ranking police officer, was accused of amassing properties and wealth beyond his means. He has denied the allegation.

Earlier, former IGP Mohd Hanif Omar launched a book titled 'The struggle for Malaysian independence' penned by former federal police director of management JJ Raj.

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