

Graft - punish the accuser, not the accused
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Corruption is perceived to be so widespread that Malaysians feel whistleblowers are more likely to be penalised than those accused of corrupt practices, said former deputy public prosecutor Kamarul Hisham Kamaruddin.

The mechanisms to punish are not fully utilised and investigations are likely to be carried out on those who raise the allegations than the allegations themselves, he said.

"The powers to prosecute exists. So the question is where do we place our trust that perpetrators would be brought to justice?" he told a public forum on corruption in Kuala Lumpur last night.

Kamarul said it was odd that the police have taken over the investigation concerning Anti-Corruption (ACA) director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor.

"People who are empowered to investigate or prosecute, are they doing their job? Because it is a question of trust at the end of the day," he said.

"The perception is that there is an influence somewhere. While 99 percent of cases are dealt with normally, there are several cases where people feel justice is not done," he added.

According to Kamarul, there is a 'certain flavour' in some of these cases.

"It's like when you enter a room and smell curry ... that the outcome of certain cases or investigations are perceived to be influenced by the will of the political masters," he explained.

He said in the Zulkipli case, the public prosecutor's office should be empowered to carry out the investigations.

Daring deed

Meanwhile, anti-corruption watchdog Gerak chairperson Ezam Mohd Noor described Malaysia as being in a 'rotten state'.

He said efforts such as by former Sabah ACA director Mohd Ramli Manan should be lauded and described as a important milestone in the fight against corruption.

Mohd Ramli had penned a report which contained explosive allegations against Zulkipli ranging from corruption to sexual assault. The document was exposed by Gerak last month.

"In this sort of situation, we have an officer who is daring enough to sign a letter when he is still an ACA officer and address it to the chief of police and copy it to the prime minister. It is truly a breakthrough," said Ezam.

"I hope this is only the beginning, we are living in a country where it is always a problem when it comes to fighting corruption, especially when it involves the higher ups," he said.

Also speaking at the seminar was Transparency International (Malaysia) deputy president Mohd Ali Hassan and malaysiakini columnist KJ John.

he seminar, entitled 'Re-examining anti-corruption mechanism', was organised by the Civil Rights Committee and the Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall.

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