

Who's best to helm the embattled ACA?

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There are mixed reactions as to who should head the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) in the wake of a scandal which saw its previous director-general accused of corruption himself.

Following the scandal, which is still being investigated, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Zulkipli Mat Noor's contract which expired on March 31 will not be renewed.

The premier later added that he will make an announcement as soon as possible on the next ACA chief.

Malaysiakini speaks to several people to find out their views on a suitable candidate.

Mohamad Ramli Manan, whistleblower in the Zulkifli case and former Sabah ACA director

It would be better to have an ACA officer (at the helm) because we know the job. If you get outsiders, they will bring in other organisational management qualities.

Instead of having to adjust to the ACA, the ACA has to adjust to them. Like how Zulkipli, who was seconded from the police, brought police managerial changes into ACA.

The candidate must be independent-minded because the challenging position often receives interference. The person must know how to put his foot down.

As for his background, it must be whiter than white.

(When quizzed, Ramli said the two ACA deputy director-generals Ahmad Said Hamdan and Zakaria Jaffar were not suitable for the top post either. He alluded that he has a file on one of them while the other rose up the ranks through fast-track promotion. He declined to elaborate)

I'm no longer in ACA. I'll let them handle their issues now.

Ragunath Kesavan, Bar Council vice-president

The person (candidate) should be of impeccable standing and respected by society and not a police officer or from the Attorney-General's Chambers because they are not independent.

The ACA should have an independent structure by reporting to Parliament instead of answering to a government department.

The ACA can't be truly independent unless it is seen as independent. Even with the

best person leading the agency, their capability will always be questioned without public support and political will.

Yap Swe Seng, rights group Suaram executive director

The government should address the bigger issue in revamping the ACA and making the selection process for a new ACA head transparent and with public participation.

This can be done by setting up a select committee consisting of participants from the ruling party, opposition, academicians and civil society.

The person (candidate) should be like former auditor-general, the late Ahmad Noordin Zakaria, because he was very independent.

He proved that he can act without fear. When he saw corruption, he would reveal it regardless of pressure from the government.

Ramon Navaratnam, Transparency International Malaysia president

A person I think that would be great for the position is (TI Malaysia founder) Tunku Abdul Aziz. If he would agree it would be wonderful. All he needs is a good team, support and political will to battle corruption.

The government should be prepared to get people from outside the government to head the ACA.

The government should have a new mind set. It should choose a successor based on a person's credibility, integrity and independence from the government.

The Prime Minister's Office should not have given Zulkipli a glowing report on his performance as ACA chief when announcing their decision not to renew his contract.

He is currently being investigated so the government should be seen to be more neutral.

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