

Expand royal commission scope, says Kit Siang
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A Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Teoh Beng Hock case should have its scope expanded to probe what caused his death while in custody of the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC), DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang says.

While the country was disappointed with the open verdict given by coroner Azmil Muntapha Abas at the end of the inquest into Teoh's death yesterday, Lim noted that there were two important findings: that Teoh did not commit suicide and that he suffered a "pre-fall injury".

"This raises the question as to who was responsible for Teoh Beng Hock's 'pre-fall injury', which reflected adversely on the MACC as well as police investigations into Teoh's death," Lim (left) said in a statement today.

"For this reason, a Royal Commission of Inquiry, not just into the procedural aspects of the MACC's investigations but to probe further into the causes of Teoh Beng Hock's death following the findings of the inquest in ruling out suicide and on Teoh's pre-fall injury, should be established immediately without any delay."

Yesterday, Azmil ruled out suicide as the cause of Teoh's death, though he also pointed out that there was no evidence to show that Teoh suffered fatal injuries prior to the fall, effectively cutting out homicide.

However, he found that Teoh had sustained bruises to his neck prior to the fall, contrary to the MACC's insistence that no force was used on Teoh while being held overnight for interrogation.

Controversy-wracked case

Teoh, 30, was found dead on July 16, 2009, on the fifth floor landing of Plaza Masalam, Shah Alam, after overnight interrogation by the Selangor MACC at its office on the 14th floor of the building.

The inquest, which began on July 29, 2009, had been fraught with controversy, with expert witnesses giving contradicting evidence on the circumstances leading to Teoh's death.

In a separate statement, a group of 52 civil society NGOs repeated Lim's call for a RCI that will not only probe further into Teoh's "torturous" death but also conduct a thorough study of the MACC's modus operandi.

The group, including Amnesty International Malaysia, Jerit and Suaram, among others, demanded that those who had instructed that Teoh be subjected to 11 hours of non-stop interrogation assume their political, administrative and criminal responsibility.

"The Inquest is now a testimony of failure for PM Najib Razak, who promised the Teoh family a thorough investigation to deliver truth and justice.

"We call upon Najib Razak to acknowledge the flaws and inadequacy of the inquest and to

immediately work on establishing a Royal Commission of Inquiry.

"The investigation into Teoh's torturous death must not end with the flawed inquest, but instead continue until all the culprits are brought to the book," the statement said.

Thai pathologist Dr Pornthip Rojanasunand (below) had testified she was certain that it was not a case of suicide as the second autopsy conducted found neither defensive injuries on the deceased's limbs nor a skull fracture typical of suicide by jumping.

She disagreed with British pathologist Dr Peter Vanezis, who testified that the fracture found on Teoh's left ankle showed that he had landed on his feet, and that he was conscious when he fell.

A note said to have been found in Teoh's bag two months after his death was also tendered as evidence at the tail end of the inquest, following allegations that the Attorney-General's Chambers had withheld evidence.

Witnesses were, however, unable to conclude that the note, said to be a 'final testament', was indeed Teoh's as it could not be proven that the handwriting samples used as comparison were his.

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