

Beng Hock: MACC must be held responsible
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I am shocked by the coroner's open verdict yesterday which rules out both suicide and homicide in the death of Teoh Beng Hock.

It's time for the government to set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into the custodial death of Teoh.

The loss of life, especially while in the custody of government enforcement officials, is always a serious matter of public concern.

There cannot be no answers for this particular case. It's simply not acceptable that one can die in the MACC's custody without knowing what had happened.

Teoh voluntarily stepped into the Selangor Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)'s office to give a statement as a witness.

He failed to come out alive, while under MACC's custody. His body was found sprawled on a service corridor in Plaza Masalam's Level 5 on July 16, 2009.

No matter from which point of view or political divide you see the death, it is just unbelievable, unacceptable and illogical that no one knows what happened to Teoh in a place where security is relatively tight.

There was also ample evidence suggesting that Teoh was under tremendous physical and mental stress, having been subjected to long hours of interrogation.

Coroner Azmil Muntapha Abas has delivered his verdict based on a set terms of reference that could have limited the inquiry.

Nevertheless, we will just have to respect the chair and move on to the next level for a justifiable and more acceptable solution.

True, it is indeed unfortunate that Beng Hock's tragic death has been politicised by certain quarters. The widely perceived lackadaisical probe by the authorities has in a way lent them credence in addition to dismaying the general public.

To all of us, life is precious. Therefore, irrespective of political affiliation, the people responsible for Teoh's death, directly or indirectly, must be brought to justice.

To me, my view now is nothing new, but an insistence and reiteration of my support for the petition calling for the setting up of the RCI during the deceased's wake at his parents' house in July 2009.

I lent the support when I was the MCA president. I am maintaining my stance now in my capacity as the MP for Pandan. The logic is rather simple: Teoh walked into the MACC office alive but failed to emerge the same. That is a fact.

Therefore, the MACC must be held responsible and the government is obliged to sincerely bring to book the culprits responsible for the tragedy that has marred the image and integrity of the MACC.

Ong Tee Keat is Pandan MP.

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