

PAC awaits MACC, police to wrap up probe on NFC

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Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chief Azmi Khalid justified the parliamentary body's decision to delay investigation into problems revolving around the National Feedlot Centre.

pac meeting on rmaf engine missing 200110 azmi khalidAzmi (left) agreed that it was his opinion that the PAC should pause its proceedings until the police and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), which also initiated investigations at about the same time, to wrap up their probe.

"It is quite normal for PAC to delay inquiries until other relevant agencies had completed their jobs, since it involves the same people and documentation," he said, in a statement today.

"But it does not mean that we are closing the case...whatever that is being recommended by the PAC to the enquiry, is to the police and the MACC, because we don't have the forensics facility to go through every document one by one," elaborated Azmi when contacted by Malaysiakini.

The veteran Padang Besar Umno MP clarified that there have been cases where witnesses had refrained from giving information on the advice of their lawyers, for fear of being subjudice.

NONE "In any case this code is not cast in stone as any member of PAC can request a hearing by making a simple request to the chairperson," he said.

Azmi was responding to calls from Ipoh Timur DAP parliamentarian Lim Kit Siang (right), who demanded the former's resignation for holding back PAC's investigations.

Urging Azmi to "not be an obstacle", Lim insisted that PAC should resume its probe and complete its report in time for Dewan Rakyat's sitting in March.

'PAC has never been partisan'

However, Azmi refused to counter Lim on a "political level", emphasising that PAC "has never been partisan either in its deliberations or conclusions".

He proudly stated that the powerful committee comprises parliamentarians who are "professional" in their conduct and fair in their "conclusions".

PAC had interviewed several agriculture and agro-based industries ministry officers on the weaknesses in the multi-million ringgit cattle farming project, raised in the 2010 Audit Report presented in parliament last November.

Azmi complained then that the government loan was given to the company even before the agreement was signed.

Lim, however, raised the issue of conflict of interest as Azmi was the natural resources and environment minister in 2006, when the cabinet was deliberating the project.

NONE He retorted today that Lim had similarly asked him to step down as the PAC chief when the committee was hearing witnesses in relation to Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal.

At the end of the PKFZ probe, PAC recommended, after an inquiry, the persons involved be investigated for criminal breach of trust, an offence that carries a maximum 20-year jail sentence, with whipping and a fine.

"I do not think I need to say more on this as evidenced by the PKFZ case ,and I leave it to the rakyat to judge me in my capacity as the PAC chairperson," said Azmi.

Likewise, Azmi said that although he was part of the cabinet in 2006, he "cannot remember the case".

"As far as I am concerned, there is no question of conflict of interest, let alone be a hindrance to any function that is duty-bound on any parliamentarian," he said.

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