

Kit Siang: Is Najib telling MACC to hands off Taib?
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DAP has asked if Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's call not to entertain allegations about Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud's alleged billions in wealth was a signal to enforcement agencies not to probe or question the matter.

"I have no doubt that without Najib's pre-emptive strike today, the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) would have taken the completely neutral but meaningless stand that it was prepared to investigate into the BMF report about Taib and his family's gargantuan wealth and asset accumulated from 31 years of Taib's chief ministership of Sarawak.

"But with the stern signal from Najib today, would MACC dare to initiate investigations into Taib ... and would there be any BN MP who would dare to endorse or support a full MACC investigation into the BMF report?" asked Lim in a statement today.

The Ipoh Timor MP was referring to Najib's dismissal this morning of Swiss-based NGO Bruno Manser Fund's (BMF) report, saying "There are all kinds of allegations, jangan kita layan (let's not entertain it)."

BMF's 45-page report claims Taib is the richest man in the country with a fortune of US\$15 billion (RM46 billion).

It also alleges that the Taib family's total wealth is worth US\$21 billion (RM64 billion).

The report was released last Wednesday in Brussels to coincide with federal minister Bernard Dompok's visit to the European Commission and is available on the Internet.

Aside from Taib, individuals profiled in the report include Taib's brother Onn Mahmud, who is the second richest family member with an estimated net worth of US\$2 billion, while Taib's eldest son Mahmud Abu Bekir Taib, a major player in Sarawak construction, property and energy businesses, is ranked third at US\$1.5 billion.

"Giving credibility to the BMF report are news reports today about the matrimonial dispute between Mahmud Abu Bekir Taib and his former wife ... as there has been no settlement offer from Mahmud's lawyers to resolve the long-standing dispute," said Lim.

'MACC duty-bound to investigate'

Lim said Najib's dismissal of the report was "sad and tragic" as it demolishes the MACC's credibility, integrity and professionalism especially after the commission launched a media blitzkrieg in Umno-linked New Straits Times this week on its successes.

"Where is the credibility of the Government Transformation Roadmap and the National Key Results Area to fight corruption and in particular to eradicate 'grand corruption'

when the BMF report ... could not be used by the MACC as basis for its anti-corruption mission?"

Describing the dismissal as "most disappointing and irresponsible", Lim called on the premier to have the MACC investigate the allegations made in BMF report.

"Najib should retract his implicit 'hands off' directive to the MACC and declare unequivocally that the MACC is duty-bound to make use of the BMF report to conduct a full, thorough and wide-ranging investigation into allegations of 'grand corruption' by Taib and his family," he said.

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