

**'Gov't machinery for party use only technically okay'**

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**By Hafiz Yatim**

Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) president, Paul Low has described using government machinery at party functions as morally wrong, but nothing can be done as there are no guidelines or rules governing a caretaker government.

Low (right) said for this reason TI-M supports binding rules for a caretaker government, on what it can or cannot do.

He recognised that being a caretaker government the existing executive has to take care of the daily running of government affairs which require the use of government facilities until the election.

"The existing caretaker executives should be entitled to bodyguards as their safety needs to be guarded.

"However, for party purposes there must be a clear distinction between when the party machinery and not government machinery can be used.

"I am afraid morally such a practice (using government machinery) is wrong, but technically it is correct as at present there are no guidelines," he said.

PM's integrity at stake?

Low was commenting on Information, Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim (second from left in photo) defence of the use of government machinery when three Information Department vehicles were spotted at the launching of the BN Batu operations centre and whether this would affect caretaker prime minister Najib Abdul Razak's integrity pledge.

Rais was quoted as saying that there was nothing wrong with the usage of government machinery because BN is still considered the caretaker government until the nomination day.

However, the minister had said starting from that day, no government agency can take part in any programme that helps in the election campaign of any one party.

Low recognised that drawing a line on using government assets between now and nomination day is difficult.

"For this reason, I support the need to have the guidelines to regulate the do's and don'ts. Presently, there are no laws to go against it as it is not defined how do you stop someone from doing or abusing this," he said.

Low however, welcomed the Penang Pakatan Rakyat government in returning the keys to their official cars, but commented that let us see what happens should Pakatan take over the federal government.

Earlier this month, it was reported that the Penang state exco members returned the keys to their official cars to state secretary Farizan Darus, in accordance with the integrity pledge

Low noted that what is glaring is that the interim or caretaker government should not be signing any new contracts.

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