

## **'Taib probe taking time over vast documents, witnesses'**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**June 29, 2013**

**By Nigel Aw**

The probe into corruption allegations against Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud has been prolonged by the vast number of documents and witnesses that investigators have to go through, said the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

"There are many documents and many parties are involved as well as witnesses that are all over (the country)," MACC investigation division secretariat assistant commissioner Lim Bee Kean told a press conference at the commission's headquarters in Putrajaya today.

Lim (left) said to date the MACC has poured through more than 400 files and has recorded statements from more than 20 individuals who are believed to be linked to the matter.

As for the recent videos released by Global Witness showing Taib's relatives claiming they could easily obtain state lands from the chief minister and also, trying to sell them to investors, Lim said a special team has been formed in parallel to the existing investigations against Taib.

"After the video linking to Taib Mahmud was released on YouTube, a team of 10 MACC investigators was formed to conduct the investigation.

"This is an additional measure, on top of the ongoing investigation before this," she said.

A special task force had also been formed early this year, Lim added, with officers from the MACC, Attorney-General's Chambers as well as other related agencies to help speed up the investigations.

"As soon as the investigation paper is completed, it will be presented to the Attorney-General's Chambers for further action," she said.

But, has Taib been questioned?

However, she said there was no time frame on when the investigations would be completed and that it would depend on the documents the MACC gathers and the witnesses interviewed.

Asked whether Taib himself has been questioned, Lim declined to respond, saying details of the investigations could not be revealed as provided for under Section 29(4) of the MACC Act 2009.

NONE Pressed repeatedly on this, she said: "The details of witnesses and those who have given their statements cannot be revealed. That is the answer."

Nonetheless, Lim said the investigations were ongoing and stressed that MACC would act without "fear and favour".

"Owing that this case involves many documents and parties, the investigations may take time to be completed.

"MACC would like to stress that investigations will continue to gather evidence and statements in line with the latest developments of the case," Lim added.

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