

Suaram: Najib must sack IGP for Kugan's death

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Various parties have called for the sacking or suspension of Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Khalid Abu Bakar after the Court of Appeal yesterday upheld a decision that the top cop and his officers were liable for the death of A Kugan in a lock-up.

One, rights NGO Suaram said the Prime Minister must immediately sack Khalid as the three Court of Appeal judges have unanimously upheld the judgment of High Court on the case that found the IGP and his police officers responsible for Kugan's death.

"An independent investigation must be conducted on the conduct of the Khalid and other police officers involved in the case when Khalid served as the Selangor chief of police...

"The IGP and his police officers involved in the case must be brought to criminal justice if the independent investigation is to find them criminally liable for the death...

"This would be in line with the judgment of the Court of Appeal that attributed liability at 55 percent for the death of Kugan against the police, and 45 percent against Navindran, the sole police officer that was charged and convicted so far," said Suaram executive director Yap Swee Seng (right) in a statement yesterday.

He said Prime Minister Najib Razak needs to show he is "serious in supporting the call of the Court of Appeal for zero tolerance of custodial deaths".

"The prime minister should not fail a second time in restoring public confidence in the police force," he added.

Yap reminded that the earlier High Court judge had found Khalid to have given misleading information at the time and failed to follow the instructions to investigate the case as murder, as well as failure to direct a formal departmental inquiry on the case.

"More damning, the High Court judge concluded that there were elements of a cover up on the real cause for the death of A Kugan," he said.

'Khalid failed to protect Kugan'

Meanwhile Teoh Beng Hock Trust for Democracy said, "We urge the federal government to suspend the current IGP Khalid Abu Bakar immediately for his failure to ensure Kugan's safety while under police detention.

"The police force must comply with international standards and human rights practice

stipulated in the United Nation's Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

The group was spawned following the death of DAP political aide Teoh while in the custody of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in 2009.

The NGO in their statement said Khalid should also be charged for giving false a statement in a bid to cover up Kugan's death.

"Right after Kugan's death in custody, Khalid reported that Kugan collapsed shortly after drinking water due to asthmatic attack.

"Later, he announced that the post-mortem report stated the cause of death was due to water in his lungs.

"On the contrary, the second post mortem revealed by pathologist Dr Prashant that Kugan had 45 external injuries and numerous internal injuries."

'Blatant cover-up'

"This shows that Khalid Abu Bakar was blatantly lying to cover up wrongdoings of police officers and against the professional ethics of civil servants," it said.

Kugan was detained on Jan 14, 2009 at the Taipan police station for suspected car theft but was found dead in a police lockup on Jan 20.

The incident happened in Selangor, at the time when Khalid was the state's chief police officer.

The NGO lauded the Court of Appeal judgment which commented that there should be zero tolerance for deaths in custody and a public inquiry should be held and urged the government to heed the call.

"We urge the government to organise a round table discussion with human rights and professional organisations to discuss the mechanism and criteria of the coroner courts set up by the government.

"This is to ensure that the coroner courts could operate independently and professionally, to act as an institution to reveal the truth over mysterious deaths and to check the police force from abusing the detainees in the lock-ups," he said.

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