

'PM has to step down now over embezzlement claim'

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Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) member Tony Pua has called on the cabinet to insist that Najib Abdul Razak takes leave as prime minister while startling allegations of embezzlement against him are investigated.

"This is already considered a gentle call. In any other developed democracies, the prime minister would have resigned in a situation like this," Pua, who is Petaling Jaya Utara MP, said.

A report by The Wall Street Journal today says Malaysian investigators have traced nearly US\$700 million paid into what they believe are personal bank accounts of Najib.

The reports claims the money is linked to the beleaguered 1MDB, which is the brainchild of Najib, but has since been mired in billion-ringgit debts.

Pua (photo) said this is a very serious matter, where huge sums of money were "transferred specifically into an account owned by the prime minister".

"We're not even talking about RM700 million. We are talking about US\$700 million," he emphasised.

"Why was this money transferred? The cabinet must call for an emergency meeting (to investigate this matter)," Pua added.

Just like Mara chairperson Annuar Musa's decision to relieve two top Mara officials from their duties until the Mara controversy can be investigated, which Pua said he supports, and therefore, the same standard must apply to Najib.

"There is no two ways about it," he insisted.

Authorities must be 'independent and impartial'

Asked if he truly believes the authorities will take action after their investigations, Pua said they must demonstrate their "independence and impartiality" in this matter.

He took it one step further and directed his call for "independence and impartiality" in the BN lawmakers as well.

"All other leaders of BN must demonstrate that there is still hope for BN. It is time to take action now, if not they will sink together with the PM," he warned.

When asked about 1MDB's denial this morning that any of its money went to Najib, Pua questioned whether 1MDB was now speaking on behalf of Najib.

"1MDB also answered me when I directed a question at (Home Minister) Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. Is it answering for all ministers now?" he asked, sarcastically.

In Penang, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (photo) called on Najib to resign if he cannot answer the allegations in the damning WSJ report.

Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general, said that WSJ is a 'reputable' newspaper but if the allegations were not true, Najib should file a suit against the newspaper in the US to clear his name.

"I hope the PM can respond to this very serious allegations in the WSJ.

"It is not only shocking but unprecedented in Malaysian history because never was a prime minister directly involved in such allegations," Lim said at a press conference.

"If he cannot explain the allegations, then it is first time in the last eight years, since Najib became PM, that we have to ask him to resign," he added.

'Sue if untrue'

Pua's calls were also echoed by PKR vice-president Tian Chua who told a separate press conference that Najib had no choice but to quit or take leave of absence to facilitate investigations.

Tian (photo) also dared Najib to sue WSJ if the report was false.

"I urge the prime minister, who has sued several local media organisations Malaysiakini and opposition figures to take stern action against WSJ and sue them if their report is inaccurate."

He added the government must disprove the report by making the original 1MDB agreements public.

"The government can't ignore this WSJ report. It must at least issue a denial," Tian said.

The Prime Minister's Office has called the WSJ report political sabotage and urged the media not to use it unless it has been verified by the authorities.