

PMO: Task force's scope is two-fold
MalaysiaKini.com
July 27, 2015

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has once again spelled out the scope of a special task force currently investigating matters related to the 1MDB controversy.

Firstly, the task force is to investigate allegations by a "foreign media" that 1MDB funds were deposited into Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's accounts.

Secondly, the task force will investigate the claim by former PetroSaudi International Ltd executive Xavier Andre Justo that he sold documents to certain parties who were conspiring to oust the country's leadership and government.

On July 8, Najib (photo) himself had commented on the scope of the task force, although he in an interested party.

"The investigation by the special task force is to determine whether the Wall Street Journal's allegation that I took 1MDB funds for my personal interest has basis or not.

"The investigation must consider the veracity of the documents published by the newspaper to support their actions," said Najib in a blog post.

However, it must be pointed out that WSJ never accused 1MDB funds of ending up in Najib's account.

Instead, WSJ had claimed that Malaysian investigators had determined that nearly US\$700 million had ended up in Najib's bank account.

Can task force be trusted?

Little is known about the genesis of the special task force nor has the task force specifically revealed its scope, often referring to "allegations against the prime minister" as its subject of probe.

The first mention of the task force appeared in March. At the time, inspector-general of police Khalid Abu Bakar said Najib would be among those investigated.

The task force only made its first public statement on July 4.

The task force consist of representatives from the police, Bank Negara, MACC and the attorney-general's chambers. It is unsure who the task force reports to.

Thus far, the task force has arrested several individuals and named the companies they were involved in.

Incidentally, those were the same companies that were named in WSJ's July 3 report.

Previously, Najib's description of the task force's scope had led to skepticism on whether it could operate independently.

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