

British PM sending adviser to meet opposition leaders

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David Cameron is sending his adviser to meet the Malaysian opposition during his visit here which starts today.

UK daily The Guardian reported that Cameron had sent his national security adviser Kim Darroch to meet Malaysian opposition leaders as concerns about alleged corruption scandal linked to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak deepens.

Cameron (photo), who was criticised for not cancelling his Malaysian leg of a four-nation tour as the country in political turmoil over the corruption allegations and Najib's attempt to marginalise his critics including by sacking his deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin defended the visit saying he would want to talk about it with the country's leaders.

"It is absolutely right to go ahead with these visits. The issues of corruption are issues in this region, as elsewhere in the world. I don't think it helps not travelling to a country and turning away. It is better to go and talk about these things.

"Nothing should be off the table. We should talk about these issues, including the specific ones now. We always have discussions with civil society figures, anti-corruption campaigners, opposition leaders, and all the rest and that will happen on this visit too," he was quoted as saying.

The Guardian reported that Darroch will meet Nurul Izzah Anwar, the daughter of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, who was also the opposition leader.

Cameron and the British High Commission had being dragged into the ongoing 1MDB squabble.

Sarawak Report editor Claire Rewcastle-Brown, the sister-in-law of Cameron's predecessor Gordon Brown, wants the British prime minister to raise the blocking of her website when he meets Najib today.

Last week, pro-BN NGOs, including the Ramesh Rao-led Pertubuhan Minda dan Sosial Prihatin (PMSP), submitted a memorandum to the British High Commission asking Rewcastle-Brown to keep out of Malaysian politics.

Petaling Jaya MP Tony Pua had written that Cameron should take Najib to task, and asked the second-term British PM for "support and encouragement" on the issue.

Meanwhile, Selangor MB Azmin Ali (photo) had questioned why Cameron would visit Malaysia if he had avoided visiting Thailand as the political struggle and strife is similar to Malaysia's.

"If David Cameron could see it fit to avoid visiting Bangkok on account of the democracy-deficit, it stands to reason that similar reservations should be held in relation to Malaysia.

"Where is the moral difference between staying clear of a military dictator and of a leader who is embroiled in a money-laundering scandal of unprecedented proportions? And that is just for starters," he said in a statement yesterday.

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