

PAC members mull disclosing 1MDB findings

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By Koh Jun Lin

The parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC) members are mulling the release of findings on the investigations done on 1MDB so far.

PAC vice-chairperson Dr Tan Seng Giaw told reporters today among the considerations are whether it is legal to do so, and what parts of the proceedings can be made public.

"The social media have various versions of the story of 1MDB. The people are yearning for the truth.

"Hence, we are here today, telling them that we are ready to continue with our work.

"We may have to let the people know how far we have gone with the inquiry," Tan (photo) told a press conference at the lobby of Parliament's temporary office block today.

The plan is to table a 'very, very brief report' to Parliament on what the PAC has done so far in the investigation.

Pressed to explain why the PAC can't simply meet and decide to release the report, Tan explained: "(In) any interim report, the facts and the figures can sometimes interfere with the final report. If you do that, you can go to jail for it."

The PAC was originally scheduled to hear the testimony of former 1MDB chief executive former 1MDB CEO Shahrol Ibrahim Halimi today, followed by chairperson Arul Kanda Kandasamy tomorrow, and former CEO Mohd Hazem Abdul Rahman on the day after.

Two former 1MDB directors - Azlan Mohd Zainol and Mohd Bakke Salleh - who quit 1MDB in 2009 were scheduled to testify on Aug 17.

However, Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia had decreed that the proceedings would be put on hold until a new PAC chairperson is elected.

Nur Jazlan Mohamed was the last chairperson but has to vacate the post as he has just been appointed deputy home minister.

Parliament's Standing Orders prohibit a member of the administration from holding office as a PAC member.

Door locked

Earlier today, Tan and another PAC member William Leong showed up at their usual meeting room at the Parliament's temporary office block at about 10.30am, only to find the

door locked.

They then adjourned to the lobby where they were joined by three more PAC members, Tony Pua, Kamarul Baharin Abbas, and Kamarudin Jaffar about 30 minutes later for the press conference.

This meant that all five opposition PAC members were present but not any of BN's four remaining members.

Also present to show support were Pokok Sena MP Mahfuz Omar and Sungai Petani MP Johari Abdul.

At the press conference, Pua (photo) questioned parliamentary and PAC secretary Roosme Hamzah's move to send a letter informing that PAC proceedings were postponed indefinitely.

He demanded to know who had ordered for the letters to be sent since this was not decided by the PAC.

If the orders had come from the speaker, he said he wanted to know on what basis the order was made, and which clause in the standing orders allowed for this.

He said the speaker should at least meet or call Tan, as the PAC vice chief, to inform that the meetings were being cancelled.

"I was informed by the vice chairperson that no phone call was made before this meeting was cancelled. This is in contempt of the PAC. He is treating the PAC like nothing," he said.

Kamarudin (photo), the MP for Tumpat, said that the Standing Orders are clear that PAC can convene meetings on its own, and likewise orders to postpone or cancel meetings can only come from the PAC and no one else.

"We oppose the decision by any party that a meeting will not be held today. To us, this is an offence under the Standing Orders, which clearly states the powers of the PAC," he said.

Meanwhile, Leong said today's episode proves that the Parliament is merely a 'rubber stamp', since even PAC's proceedings are being interfered with.

"If this carries on, democracy would have to be practiced under the tree, in the corridors, and in the lobby. This is a matter that the public should take cognizance of, whether in fact we are having parliamentary democracy.

"A lot of investigations are going on under Section 124B of the Penal Code as to activities that are detrimental to parliamentary democracy.

"The exercise of the powers of the PAC is now being interfered. These are activities that are

detrimental to parliamentary democracy,” he said.

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