

Another minister voices out on MACC transfers

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Nigel Aw

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Paul Low today became the second minister to voice out against the transfer Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) officers to the Prime Minister's Department.

He said while the MACC officers' transfers have been described as "administrative", they were nonetheless "inappropriate".

Low said he was concerned in particular with the transfer of MACC special operations division chief Bahri Mohamad Zin as he was a lead investigator in an important case.

Bahri (photo) was leading the investigation into state-owned SRC International which reportedly deposited RM42 million into Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's personal bank accounts.

"If people leading the investigation on any case can be transferred out by outside parties not within the MACC, then the work of their investigations will be compromised," he told Malaysiakini when contacted.

Both Bahri and MACC strategic communication director Rohaizad Yaakob were transferred out yesterday following an announcement by the Public Service Department (PSD).

Transfer 'inappropriate'

Low said while the PSD had administrative power to transfer the duo, it was inappropriate.

"The reason it is inappropriate is because MACC is an independent agency. You are supposed to operate independently including the nature of assignments.

"So even if MACC officers had done something wrong, they can be dealt with within the MACC itself.

"They should not be transferred out by 'outsiders' that is not within the MACC structure," he said.

He said such actions risk compromising the independence of the MACC.

"This is why we are concerns about the MACC and this is why we are proposing for the MACC to have a separate commission from the civil service (to hire its own staff)," he said.

Low said he was studying the matter further and engaging with the relevant authorities over the transfers before deciding on the next course of action.

Yesterday, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin (photo) had said the transfers appeared to be an act of intimidation against the MACC.

However, Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had insisted the transfers were merely "administrative" and the issue should not be politicised.

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