

TI: Absence of answers on RM2.6b fuels suspicion, mistrust

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In the absence of answers and an independent investigation, "suspicion of corruption, mistrust and appearance of being above the law will prevail", said Transparency International managing director Cobus De Swardt.

"US\$700 million (deposited into Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's personal bank accounts ahead of the 2013 general election) is very significant

"The public wants to know the truth and nothing but the truth... Only the truth will restore trust. Malaysians deserve that urgently.

"The pain has to be stopped," he added in his speech at the International Anti-Corruption Conference (ICAC) in Putrajaya.

De Swardt also quoted TI-Malaysia chair Akhar Satar who said if something is kept hidden, it would become worse.

On Wednesday, TI global chief Jose Ugaz (photo) ruffled feathers in Putrajaya when he delivered a scathing speech on the allegations against Najib and demanded answers to several questions.

Rebuking him, Multimedia and Communications Minister Salleh Said Keruak argued that the issue has been highly politicised, and when answers are given, they are rejected.

The RM2.6 billion has been described as political donation from a Middle Eastern source while Najib had denied using public funds for personal gains.

Damaging to Malaysia

Meanwhile, De Swardt also responded to Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who claimed that international NGOs have been duped into recycling baseless allegations and unwittingly involving themselves in the country's internal politics.

De Swardt said the issue is damaging Malaysia, both domestically and internationally, and therefore warranted clarification.

"It is in Malaysia's interest to resolve this as quickly as possible.... Your country is also in an economic crisis and not coming clean on this, the suspicion will remain that there is something wrong," he told reporters.

"That suspicion must be cleared up. We are not baying for the PM to resign because the facts of the matter are not all on the table but surely it cannot be that in a situation this

tense to regain your innocence by remaining silent," he added.

The allegations against Najib have become one of the focal points of the three-day conference, which ends today.

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