

## **Muhyiddin: Khairuddin should be protected, not persecuted**

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Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin slammed the detention of former Batu Kawan Umno deputy chief Khairuddin Abu Hassan under security laws, after Khairuddin lodged international complaints against 1MDB.

In a hard-hitting statement, Muhyiddin said 1MDB is a state entity and is not above the law.

So anyone blowing the whistle on wrongdoing within 1MDB should be protected, and not prosecuted, least so under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 which is meant to curb terrorism, he said.

“Given that the Council of Rulers has decreed that the government must solve the 1MDB issue and take action, then it is reasonable for all citizens to raise their concern over the matter or lodge reports urging a transparent, fair and independent probe.

“Those who lodge reports on 1MDB must be protected by the law, and not the other way round,” he said.

The Council of Rulers in a rare decree yesterday called on the government to wrap up the investigation on 1MDB and to punish any wrongdoers.

Khairuddin, who initially barred from leaving the country, then arrested for allegedly trying to topple the government.

He was released a day before his six-day remand expired, and re-arrested under Sosma, which allows detention of up to 28 days without trial.

His lawyer Matthias Chang – a former political secretary to ex-prime minister Dr Mahatahir Mohamad – was also questioned by police.

Muhyiddin was sacked as deputy prime minister soon after he issued a statement questioning 1MDB.

He remains Umno number two, but is reportedly stripped of party responsibilities. The duties are taken over by deputy prime minister and party vice president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (photo).

### **Malaysia's image in the mud**

According to Muhyiddin, not taking strict action to resolve the 1MDB matter is eroding public trust in government and smearing Malaysia's image.

“I have on several occasions overseas been asked by foreign leaders about 1MDB. They are

puzzled over what is happening to our country.

“They cannot believe that a state investment firm can rack up liabilities worth billions of ringgit and face chronic cash flow issues that it is unable to service its debts. Even more tragically, the funds have disappeared,” he said.

As a trading nation, he said, Malaysia needs to inspire investor confidence and 1MDB is dragging things down.

1MDB is the brainchild of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, who is chairperson of the board of advisors.

Najib this week admitted that 1MDB was too ambitious, resulting in the current fix.

He has repeatedly promised to resolve the matter.

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