

Obama urged to needle Najib on corruption, money laundering
MalaysiaKini.com
Nov 15th, 2015

The Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) has urged US President Barack Obama to address issues of corruption and money laundering claims with Prime Minister Najib Razak during his Kuala Lumpur visit next week.

C4 founding director Cynthia Gabriel said this must be a prerequisite to discussions related to the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreements (TPPA) or enhancing trade ties.

Gabriel said this ahead of the pair's planned meeting in the capital to discuss issues of economy, environment, regional security and counter-terrorism besides the 'code of conduct' in the South China Sea.

"President Obama's visit to Malaysia must not be on trade and commerce issues only but also address important and critical concerns of the floundering Malaysian ringgit, grand corruption, allegations of money laundering, rising cost of living and its impact on the economy," Gabriel said in a statement.

The corruption watchdog urged Obama to reevaluate the US government's strong support towards Najib's administration despite the credibility crisis, dismal human rights record, and allegations of grand corruption and financial scandals in the country.

Gabriel wants Obama to raise the issue of Malaysia's "oppressive" human rights record as authorities here continue to stifle dissent and clamp down on investigations involving the financial fiasco related to the country's sovereign fund -1Malaysia Development Berhad.

She also called on Obama to question the allegations by US financial paper *The Wall Street Journal* on RM2.6 billion deposited into Najib's private bank accounts before the 2013 national polls.

"Regrettably, Najib has not answered these allegations concerning the 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion donations despite months of controversy," said Gabriel.

Najib, who is also the Finance Minister has distanced himself from any wrongdoing, and vowed he would never steal the rakyat's money for personal gain.

Nation rocked

The controversy has rocked the nation and send the authorities to crackdown on opposition voices, including those of former top Umno leaders like past Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, who was recently sacked from Najib's cabinet.

Meanwhile, Gabriel continued to press Obama to raise the issue of Najib's clampdown of media outlets in Malaysia that expose corrupt practices and his move to arrest or transfer government officials from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, which is largely seen as interfering with probe into the 1MDB.

"Obama must insist for more transparency in government dealings, in Free Trade Agreements and the TPP especially in the expenditure of mega-projects, government procurement and trade pacts," she said.

"Will President Obama bring these issues to the table in his meeting with Najib and demand responsibility in leadership?" asked Gabriel, who is a Petaling Jaya city councillor.

"Malaysians await in anticipation," Gabriel declared.