

PM's explanation on RM2.6b splits Umno delegates

MalaysiaKini.com

Dec 11th, 2015

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Despite Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's confidence that he will persevere through the RM2.6 billion controversy, many delegates at the ongoing Umno general assembly have mixed views on the huge sum of money found in his personal bank accounts.

Interviewed at the Putra World Trade Centre today, several delegates said it still felt like there were things about the RM2.6 billion that could and certainly should be explained further.

Najib has denied any wrongdoing over the money in his account which is currently being investigated by the MACC. He said the amount was a political donation from a donor in the Middle-East. The MACC has confirmed that it has met the donor.

Najib has also said that while the account was under his name, it wasn't a personal account.

According to a delegate from Perak who declined to be named, the 'kind-hearted' donor needs to be named along with personal details.

"Personally, there are certain things about this issue that can still be clarified because the explanation is not completely thorough.

"I mean, who is (the donor)? What are their details because the rakyat wants to know all this.

"Especially in the political situation now where the opposition keeps attacking Umno, we need to be more transparent to make things easier for the rakyat and party members to do grassroots work," pointed out the delegate.

Another question he had was why the money was deposited into Najib's personal bank accounts.

The money was not even reflected in the party's financial statements, he added.

Cheras delegate Zainal Abidin Abdul Hamid said not every delegate accepted what Najib said in his opening speech yesterday.

"Not everyone accepted his speech well because not everyone necessarily supports what the president said.

"There are so many people saying the money is from the Middle East but we don't know whether it's true or not.

"This is not clear enough to the delegates. The funds talked about yesterday are also more towards funding for the 14th general election," Zainal said when met by Malaysiakini.

On integrity surrounding the RM2.6 billion affair, he said it is not an issue because each political party had its own funding.

"All political parties receive political funding and it is a normal thing. It's just that the way the money was received is not clear," he said.

'Truth will be proven'

There were also delegates who welcomed Najib's speech and had utmost confidence in the prime minister.

Rembau delegate Abu Bakar Ghalam said the truth about the RM2.6 billion would be proven soon enough.

"From the mood of the delegates yesterday after the president's speech, it seems that a majority accepted his explanation and we are confident he is on the side of truth.

"The truth will be proven soon enough," said Abu Bakar.

He added that the delegates do not intend to call for any further investigation.

"We're not sure but what we do know is that the donation is from one person. Maybe the donation came from Saudi Arabia, but how many we're not sure and we won't probe further.

"We are very confident that the president is telling the truth," he said.

Another Perak delegate Zainul Samad shared the same view as Abu Bakar.

"For us Umno members, it is clear enough that it was a political donation. Opposition parties also get political donations and no one questions those.

"We as Umno members, we accept," he said.

Below are some of the quotes from delegates who spoke to Malaysiakini:

'A normal thing'

Hisham Haji Abdul Hamid: "(The RM2.6 billion) is an individual donation to another individual. For example, if someone donates to me, that is my right.

"It's the same for the president. If someone gives him money, it's his money. It's his right to distribute it to whomever he wants.

"All political parties have someone funding them. You don't tell me PKR, PAS or DAP don't have someone funding them.

"We as Malaysians have to wait for the investigations. So far we accept the explanations.

"As an Umno member, if it's proven the president did something wrong, he has to get out. So we have to wait for the outcome of the investigations."

Wan Abdul Hakim Wan Mokhtar: "It (the RM2.6 billion issue) has been explained so many times and even the deputy prime minister has explained this in Parliament. They, however, can't say much because it's still under investigation.

"In the president's speech yesterday, he has also explained. If the party allows donations then there's no problem.

"I just feel this issue shouldn't be discussed outside. Political donations are a normal thing for any party."

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