

PAC chief: PM not mentioned in report as no evidence of wrongdoing
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak was not mentioned in the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report on 1MDB tabled in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday because the PAC did not find any evidence to indicate wrongdoing or abuse of power, said PAC chairperson Hasan Arifin.

This was the unanimous conclusion and consensus of the PAC members (comprising government and opposition MPs), he said in an interview with Bernama in Kuala Lumpur today.

Hasan said the PAC investigated every allegation and accusation that was hurled at the prime minister over a period of 18 months.

The findings of the PAC, however, were geared towards the chronic failure of the outlined processes, regulations and procedures, where the 1MDB management, and not the government, should be held responsible, he said.

Hasan said the government had always maintained that the allegations and accusations of corruption, misappropriation of funds and abuse of power were false and baseless.

Hasan also said that the impartiality of the PAC and its ability to convene without the presence of the media, the public and government were among the attributes that enabled it to come up with a balanced, accurate and fair conclusion.

“True, there were arguments and objections on some issues, but we eventually reached a conclusion, as can be seen in this report,” he said.

Among the points in the conclusion were that there was no evidence to suggest criminal misconduct related to misuse of funds or investment transactions or investments or any 1MDB activity that was illegal in nature, he said.

The PAC also found no evidence to indicate any wrongdoing or abuse of power by the prime minister in relation to 1MDB, he said.

Hasan said the PAC also found that there was no ‘missing’ RM42 billion as alleged by various quarters as it had been accounted for and there was no payment from 1MDB to the personal account of the prime minister.

Hasan said the PAC identified several instances where the 1MDB management failed to adhere to proper governance processes, including not implementing specific instructions of the board of directors, making decisions prior to full approval of the Board of Directors, and failing to be transparent with the board of directors.

“To that end, specific recommendations were made in the report which we believe the relevant authorities will evaluate and take action, if necessary,” he said.

The PAC chairperson said the conclusion was also reached thanks to unlimited access to information and use of the abundant parliamentary resources.

‘Needless for any appeal’

Asked if there was a mechanism for any individual to appeal against the findings of the PAC, such as through the courts or judicial review, Hasan said that since the PAC does not impose penalties, it was needless for any appeal.

“The PAC does not impose penalties, it is needless for any appeal. The jurisdiction of the PAC is to verify fiduciary compliance and point out violations that need further evaluation or investigation by the relevant authorities,” he said.

Asked whether the finding of wrongdoing in the government-linked company would be the basis for evaluation of other GLCs, Hasan said that to provide a more accurate explanation, the PAC findings were not geared towards misconduct, which is a pejorative or misleading term.

Besides Hasan, the PAC members are Vice-chairperson Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP MP for Kepong), eight Barisan Nasional MPs, two PKR MPs and one MP each from DAP and PAS.

- Bernama