

S'wak Report editor Rewcastle to write book on 1MDB
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Sarawak Report editor Clare Rewcastle-Brown is writing a book on the 1MDB scandal, which she describes as the biggest story in her investigative journalism career.

"I might be writing a little less in *Sarawak Report* at the moment because I am trying to write the biggest story, in a book about the 1MDB investigations," she said.

"It will be the story behind the story - how and why I started to cover this scandal. It was quite adventurous!" she told *Malaysiakini* at the Second Asian Investigative Journalism Conference in Nepal yesterday.

The British journalist said she will include issues of timber corruption in Sabah and Sarawak in her book.

She admitted it might be hard for her to complete her book by the end of this year, despite wanting to do things quickly.

When asked if Malaysians would be able to read the book, she said they would definitely be able to, online.

'PM unlikely to quit'

Rewcastle-Brown, who was born in Sarawak, first set up the whistleblower blog in February 2010 to highlight the mass deforestation in the Borneo state.

She later focused on 1MDB and the millions of ringgit that allegedly went into the private bank accounts of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, money the government maintains is a donation from the Middle East.

The 1MDB saga and the donation issue have pushed massive crowds to take to the streets to demand Najib's resignation, with similar numbers expected at Bersih's fifth rally in November.

On this, Rewcastle-Brown opined that Najib is unlikely to step down unless a successor can be put in place to ensure he escapes prosecution.

"He is undecided (whether to step down)....he wants to keep his money and he wants to keeps (himself) a free man," she said.

"I am not entirely sure he feels he can guarantee that if he is in full control; just look at the extra power he has to accumulate for himself because he doesn't feel secure," she said.

"I am sure he is thinking the best thing is for him to try and win an election by abusing his power in order to make sure the election is announced in his favour," she said.

Possible mistrust

Attorney-general Mohamed Apandi Ali had cleared Najib of wrongdoing in receiving US\$681 million on the grounds that it was a "donation" from the Arab royal family.

However the US Department of Justice (DOJ) in its September [forfeiture suits](#) to recover allegedly embezzled funds maintains investigations show the money had come from 1MDB.

The [DOJ said](#) at least US\$3.5 billion was stolen from 1MDB and seeks to confiscate US\$1 billion in assets acquired in their country, purportedly using the stolen money.

Najib had previously denied any wrongdoing when *The Wall Street Journal* first [broke the news](#) about the funds in Najib's accounts in July last year, saying he has never taken public funds for personal gain.

Rewcastle-Brown speculated Najib cannot trust his second in command Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, citing the latter's alleged "track record of betraying others" such as former ally Anwar Ibrahim.

"Well, I think he (Zahid) used to work with (former opposition leader) Anwar Ibrahim," she said.

Zahid, seen to be previously close to Anwar, was arrested in September 1998 under the Internal Security Act, a day after the then deputy prime minister's first arrest.

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