

## **Najib backs election funding reforms, puts ball in opposition's court**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said Umno and BN are in agreement with the political funding reforms suggested by the National Consultative Committee on political financing today.

However, Najib said, this is something that must be agreed to by all parties, including the opposition.

"This is something the government has fought for. We need new political financing laws that are more transparent and can be monitored by objective and neutral parties.

"This method needs to be agreed to by both sides. Even though BN agrees, the opposition must also agree.

"This proposed new law will affect all parties," Najib said at a press conference at the Putra World Trade Centre after the monthly Umno supreme council meeting today.

Earlier today, the committee's chairperson Paul Low released a statement on the report compiled by the committee over the course of 12 months, along with its 32-point recommendations to reform political funding laws in the country.

Some of the recommendations are for all funders contributing more than RM3,000 to be publicly declared, foreign funding to be banned and for election spending limits to be abolished.

### **'High time to do so'**

Umno information Chief Annuar Musa also agreed with the political funding reforms, saying that it was "high time" to do so.

Annuar (*photo*) said reforms to the political funding system were first suggested before the 13th general election, but due to disagreements by certain parties, the plan was shelved.

He welcomed the suggestions to make the sources of funding public as it would be better regulated that way.

"We hope the other political parties will agree because Umno and BN have decided that we want the election funding to be made more transparent... open book policy," Annuar told reporters as he was leaving the supreme council meeting.

However, he said, he personally disagreed with the ban on foreign funding.

As long as the source is made public, he said, there should be no issues with foreign funding.

"The most important thing is that the source is disclosed.

"As long as it's a legitimate source, even if it's foreign, it's not a problem," he said.

Annuar also conceded that it was possible for external intervention to occur in foreign funding, but said that mechanisms could be put in place to prevent that.

### **Najib: I was mistranslated**

Meanwhile, Najib said he was mistranslated on remarks he made while in Berlin, Germany, pn the next general election.

Najib had been reported as saying that he would oppose the call for an early election, before the 2018 deadline.

In the press conference today, he explained that what he actually said was that the next general election was not due until 2018.

"The translator didn't understand what I was saying. I was speaking in English but the translator translated it into German.

"I have already made a clarification yesterday, that I didn't say the election will be in 2018, nor did I say that it will be held much earlier," Najib said.

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