

Outgoing US envoy responds to DOJ suit and 'MO1'
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When the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) civil suit related to 1MDB was announced in July, the questions on people's minds were: How would this affect Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak? And what would happen to Malaysia-US ties?

On the first matter, outgoing US ambassador to Malaysia Joseph Y Yun, in an interview with *Malaysiakini* at his office in Kuala Lumpur, was initially reluctant to share his views.

"I think I'll go to the next question," he said, with laughter, when asked what he thought of Najib's performance so far.

And when asked if he had any words of advice for Najib – given the 1MDB scandal and the fact that Najib was the 'Malaysian Official 1' mentioned in the DOJ documents – Yun said:

"I have no advice (for the prime minister) on the matter. Well, good luck, you know?" he chuckled. "No, nothing."

But on a more serious note, Yun stressed there was a reason only four people – Riza Aziz, Jho Low, Khadem al-Qubaisi and Mohamed Ahmed Badawy Al-Husseiny – were named in the DOJ lawsuit to seize assets related to 1MDB.

"The four people named in the filing are because they own the assets in the US. That is why they were named," he explained.

Yun said he suspected a civil hearing would take place soon, but maintained that it was not political and would not affect ties between Malaysia and the US.

"I've not seen any effect on our relations and I think the case would be isolated, that it would continue on its own track.

"While our bilateral relations – the way we work, the way our governments work on diplomacy, on business, on investment – won't be affected," he said.

"I think it would be terribly misleading to imagine any political elements to what is a civil case."

Asked why it was not a criminal case, Yun said he was in the dark about this, as it was the DOJ's decision.

"The purpose of the initiative and DOJ's actions are to protect the US financial system from money laundering – to protect the banking system for people who use dollar-denominated accounts and to protect markets in general.

"So, it is in our interest to protect our own economic business and financial system. The DOJ action is so far a civil case. There is no reason at all to take any politics into consideration, including US politics, Malaysian politics or any other political calendar," he added.

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