

I prefer GLC leadership independent from politics: GIACC's Abu Kassim

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The leadership of government-linked companies should be free from politics, says the director-general of the National Centre for Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption (GIACC).

Abu Kassim Mohamed told a forum today that the National Anti-Corruption Plan has clearly mentioned that only a person with integrity should be appointed to lead a GLC.

However, he did not deny that there were instances when non-active politicians who were appointed as GLC members or its chairperson had performed well in leading the companies.

"My answer is that the NACP has clearly mentioned, saying that we should appoint a person with high integrity to lead a GLC.

"And the implementation at that time, the government tried to avoid as maximum as possible from appointing active politicians. Because there are cases, where politicians, non-active politicians were appointed as GLC members or chairperson and did very well," he said.

Abu Kassim was speaking as a panellist at the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Forum organised by the International Strategy Institute held in Putrajaya this morning.

He was responding to a request by the programme's moderator for his take on whether politicians should be totally barred from being appointed to GLCs.

A former head of the MACC, Abu Kassim said he believes that the companies should be free from political interference.

"There is a kind of worry from many sectors (over political appointments). And from my experience, I prefer if we can have leadership within GLCs who are truly independent of politics," he said.

The NACP was introduced by the previous Pakatan Harapan administration led by the then Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The five-year plan outlines a total of 115 initiatives to minimise the opportunity for corrupt practices.

The Perikatan Nasional government under Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin had come under criticism after numerous politicians from its component parties were appointed to GLCs soon after the coalition came to power in March.

Those who criticised the move included Umno vice-president Khaled Nordin, who said that such a practice was not the way forward while former PNB CEO Abdul Jalil Rasheed said the practice would have a “terrible” impact on the perception of investors on transparency and integrity in corporate Malaysia.

When met by reporters at the sidelines of the event, Abu Kassim said that he had delivered his opinion to Muhyiddin who also agreed with him.

"The PM believes that they should appoint people who are professional, and integrity should be one of the elements that should be considered.

"That is my opinion and I delivered it to the PM, and the PM to an extent, he agreed with it."

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