

Was Dr M aware of allegation against Zeti and family, asks anti-graft watchdog

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An anti-corruption watchdog is the latest to demand answers over a report which implicated former Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) governor Zeti Akthar Aziz and her family in the 1MDB scandal.

The Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) also trained its guns on former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, noting that he appointed Zeti, who is now the chairperson of Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB), as a member of the Council of Eminent Persons after the last general election.

“Was Mahathir aware of this matter?”

“Zeti’s appointment as a member of the council clouds the efforts in pursuing the truth behind the 1MDB scandal.

“This is also affected by her appointment as PNB chairperson. If this matter was

within his knowledge, then this is nothing but a gross abuse of office,” it added in a statement today.

C4 was responding to media reports on Singapore authorities alerting BNM of suspicious transactions amounting to RM66 million from fugitive businessperson Jho Low to a firm allegedly owned by Zeti's husband and son in 2015 when she was still heading the central bank.

“If the bizarre 1MDB money trail had not already provided overwhelming shock and awe at the gruesome level of thievery, this revelation, if true, will speak volumes of the corruption of our institutions.

“The chilling fact of the matter in this expose is that, if there is any truth to the matter, the integrity of BNM as a whole would be seen as fully compromised and would smell foully of complicity and corruption.

“This information must be confirmed urgently by the authorities. Silence will only lead to more questions and speculations about the matter, further weakening any trust the people have left in our institutions and authorities,” it added.

Apart from Mahathir, C4 also wanted answers on whether Zeti knew of the transactions as she was still in office at the time and if BNM, which is supposed to be an independent institution guarding against financial fraud, was in the know and failed to act.

“C4 calls for immediate answers and further investigation into the matter and for the parties involved to come clean on the matter.

“It bears reminding again and again that the funds of 1MDB were siphoned from the people.

“Accountability must be the cornerstone of every administration, and such discoveries make it difficult for the trust deficit of the people towards the administration and its institutions to be overcome,” it added.

Yesterday, Malaysiakini reported that DAP lawmaker Lim Lip Eng had also demanded answers over the latest allegation, stressing that BNM's reputation was at stake.

Last December, it was reported that Zeti's husband and their two sons had admitted knowing about receiving money from 1MDB funds.

The admission was contained in statutory declarations signed in March 2019. The money was in the accounts of Cutting Edge Industries in Singapore, and the three admitted to being the beneficial owners of the accounts.

The statutory declarations, according to FMT, were certified as authentic by the attesting lawyers.

Meanwhile, controversial blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin had also raised the matter, prompting PKR president Anwar Ibrahim to seek answers from Zeti.

In her response, Zeti described the allegation as “false and malicious”.

“I wish to reiterate that my family and I have never received any sums of money from 1MDB,” the former BNM governor said, adding that she had extended her fullest cooperation with the 1MDB investigations.

Zeti also said she had provided the police and the MACC with all the necessary information in relation to the investigations on 1MDB and former premier Najib Abdul Razak.

“I am unable to make any further statements as I am a potential witness in the ongoing criminal trial of the former prime minister,” she added.

Last July, Najib was sentenced to 12 years' jail and slapped with an RM210 million fine over the misappropriation of funds linked to SRC International Sdn Bhd, a former 1MDB subsidiary.

He is also facing another 25 charges of money laundering and abuse of power involving RM2.28 billion of 1MDB funds.

Zeti had maintained that she was not aware of the funds which flowed into the former premier's accounts.

She claimed that in 2015, Najib had summoned her to his office when he was still the prime minister and tried to convince her to clear him, but she refused.

In an exclusive interview with Malaysiakini following his defeat in the 2018 general election, Najib claimed that Zeti was aware of the sum in his bank account, which he alleged was a donation from a Saudi prince.

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