

Dompok's shock exit from integrity committee
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Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Bernard Dompok has announced his shock resignation as the head of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Integrity in the wake of questions over his leadership.

"I have since reflected on my position as chairperson of the committee and decided to resign," he said in a three-paragraph statement today.

"I feel that as a member of the cabinet, I may not be able to do justice to the tasks assigned to the committee by Parliament," he said, adding that his decision was conveyed to Dewan Rakyat speaker Ramli Ngah Talib.

Dompok's decision to resign from the bi-partisan committee followed opposition leader Lim Kit Siang's question on why a scheduled committee meeting yesterday into a fake identity card scandal in Sabah dubbed 'Project M' was suddenly cancelled.

Lim is Dompok's deputy in the committee.

The opposition leader claimed that the meeting was cancelled after committee members were told of Lim's suggestion to call former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad to testify.

However, Dompok said the meeting was called off because the National Registration Department (NRD) officials who were slated to testify could not attend. And this was conveyed via a letter last Friday.

"As chairperson of the committee, I therefore agreed not to proceed with the meeting as there was no other item in the agenda for that particular meeting," he said in the statement.

Not surprised

In an immediate response, Lim said Dompok's resignation "did not come as a surprise" as it is a rare practice to appoint a cabinet member to chair a parliamentary committee.

"We have to look into how the functions of the committee will not be affected by his resignation," he said, adding that he is unsure who will take over the post.

On the minister's explanation as to why the meeting was cancelled, Lim declined to comment, saying that the committee will deal with the resignation of its chief first.

Dompok has come under intense pressure, especially from Lim, regarding several matters. The most recent being the committee's 'flip-flop' stand in March over the corruption allegations against former Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor.

The select committee, which has 12 members - 10 from Barisan Nasional and two from the opposition - allows members of Parliament to, among others, inquire into cases of corruption and abuse of power.