

Kit Siang and groups support Dompok
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Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang has come out to defend Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Bernard Dompok after he was criticised by cabinet compatriot Nazri Aziz.

Lim's response came in the wake of Dompok's shock resignation as the head of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Integrity (PSCI) on Wednesday.

However, Nazri said the resignation was seen as being influenced by the committee's deputy chairperson which happens to be Lim.

Nazri pointed out that the committee was set up to meet people, obtain feedback and formulate a programme or find ways to improve on policy, not investigate people.

He also said Dompok was frustrated that Nazri had objected to the PSCI calling the then Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor to appear before the Select Committee.

The committee was set to meet Zulkipli and whistleblower, former Sabah ACA chief Mohamad Ramli Manan but the meeting was eventually cancelled three times.

Dompok's decision to resign from the bi-partisan committee followed Lim's question on why a scheduled committee meeting yesterday with National Registration Department (NRD) into a fake identity card scandal in Sabah dubbed 'Project M' was suddenly cancelled.

Test of strength

The NRD has refused to appear before the committee - a move which Nazri has supported.

Lim then pointed out that this appeared to be a test of strength between Nazri and Dompok with the former having the upper hand.

"Even if Dompok is prepared to reconsider his resignation as chairman of PSCI, it is not clear that the cabinet would agree to his continuing to serve in this capacity," he said.

Meanwhile, Transparency International president Ramon Navaratnam expressed regret over Dompok's resignation and over the NRD's refusal to comply with the committee's request.

"It is a serious matter and indicates an unbecoming attitude of an agency when a meeting called by the Parliamentary Select Committee can be rejected.

"This is also disrespectful to Parliament and reflects the standard and quality of administration of this country," Ramon said in a statement today.

He also called for Dompok's position as chairperson of the PSCI to be reinstated and that the NRD be held accountable for the issuance of identity cards in Sabah where there is apparent widespread abuse.

"Tough disciplinary action must be taken against individuals and agencies that do not heed parliamentary meetings seriously," he added.

Echoing their support for Dompok is the Council of Churches of Malaysia who is appealing to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to implement his stated policies of integrity, accountability and transparency by reinstating Dompok to the PSCI post.

"As much as we regret his resignation, we applaud his courage based on his conviction that issues related to transparency in the government administration should not be compromised," their statement added.

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