

**MACC to investigate Najib's RM5 mil remark**  
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The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) today confirmed that it has opened a file into Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's controversial RM5 million "let's make a deal" remark in Sibu last week.

Many have claimed that Najib violated election rules against bribing, chief among whom was veteran politician Karpal Singh, who said that the premier had violated Section 10(a) of the Election Offences Act.

MACC chief Abu Kassim Mohamed (above, centre) told reporters at a press conference in Petaling Jaya that the anti-graft body has received complaints about the PM's campaign speech and is investigating the incident.

"All complaints about money politics will be investigated by the commission. It is our responsibility, we have to investigate, as long as there is a complaint," said the MACC chief commissioner.

However, Abu Kassim declined to furnish any more details and told reporters to get further information from the commission's investigation director Mustafar Ali, who was also present.

Witnesses to be called

Met by reporters after the press conference, Mustafar said that a file had been opened on the matter.

"I can confirm that we are opening an investigation. We will look into the matter and see if there is an offense," he added.

Mustafar also said that the commission will be calling in witnesses to record their statements on the matter. He did not discount the possibility of Najib being one of the witnesses summoned.

**NONE**In the controversial incident, Najib (left) promised to sign a cheque for RM5 million for flood mitigation development in Chinese-majority Rejang Park, provided Sibu voters "deliver" him Robert Lau Hui Yew as the winning candidate for BN.

"Let's make a deal. If you deliver me Robert Lau, Jr, on Sunday, I will sign the cheque on Monday," Najib said.

Mustafar was also questioned by reporters about whether the MACC would investigate Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim over his promise during the Hulu Selangor campaign to issue land grants.

In response, Mustafar said MACC would investigate "all complaints" of alleged corruption, abuse or money politics.

He did not disclose, however, the specific complaints that the commission had received.

Mustafar merely said that reports had been lodged of alleged corruption, one of which

pertained to Najib's RM3 million promise for a Chinese school in Hulu Selangor and another to the Sibu "let's make a deal" incident.

Both Abu Kassim and Mustafar were attending a forum organised by Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) on political financing in Malaysia, which was held in conjunction with the NGO's launch of a book entitled 'Reforming Political Financing in Malaysia.'

reforming political financing forum 230510 panelThe book is the end product of a study by TI-M of political financing in Malaysia.

It will be the centerpiece of a nationwide campaign for political financing reforms, which will include regional workshops on voter education and will culminate in the handover of a memorandum to the prime minister in December.

The memorandum will contain the recommendations of a task force consisting of legal experts, political scientists and civil society representatives who will review proposed legislation to empower reforms on political financing.

'Government not bound by Act'

Earlier in the forum, Umno legal counsel Hafarizam Harun claimed that Najib's Sibu "let's make a deal statement" does not constitute an offence under the Elections Offences Act as the prime minister was speaking on behalf of the government.

reforming political financing forum 230510 william leong"A government is not a 'natural person', as such it cannot be prosecuted under the act," Hafarizam asserted.

However, PKR treasurer William Leong (left, centre) contended that when Najib ascended the stage to give his speech for BN, Najib ceased to be a prime minister, but is just an individual official from a political party, who is bound by the Act.

The forum was chaired by TI-M projects, policy and campaigns director Josie Fernandez, included Mustafar, Leong, Hafarizam, Election Commission deputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar and academician Edmund Terence Gomez.

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