

**Mahfuz: 'MA-sissies' afraid of Bala  
Malaysiakini.com  
July 12, 2010**

Opposition MPs today questioned the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) reluctance to question private investigator P Balasubramaniam face-to-face.

In contrast, the French authorities, they claimed, had invited him to France and made him the first witness from Malaysia to testify in investigations into alleged corruption in the sale of Scorpene submarines by state-owned naval shipyard DCN to Malaysia.

It is a shame that it is the French who are serious about investigating the corruption allegations and not the Malaysian government, said PAS' Pokok Sena parliamentarian Mahfuz Omar (extreme right) at a press conference in the Parliament lobby today.

"A foreign government and not the MACC is looking into this. This is because they have integrity, they don't want talk that one of their state-owned agencies is said to be involved in corruption, involving their politicians and Malaysian politicians.

"Why is the MACC not looking into this? Why are they not talking to Balasubramaniam? This is very strange. I think that the commission is afraid of him."

Mahfuz then joked that the Malay acronym for MACC - SPRM - must mean "Suruhanjaya Pondan Rasuah Malaysia" or "Malaysian Sissy Corruption Commission" if it shows such cowardly behaviour.

PKR Batu parliamentarian Tian Chua, who held the press conference jointly with Mahfuz, agreed with the view.

He said the MACC must think that it is better than the French police, only sending over a series of "quiz questions", while the French police put more weight into his testimony such that they ask for a face-to-face meeting.

"If it were the case that I am ever called by the commission to testify, then all I have to do is answer a series of question via email, I don't need to go to the MACC office like the late Teoh Beng Hock and go into such tall buildings," said Mahfuz, taking another jibe at the commission.

Chua (right) also confirmed news report that Balasubramaniam is already in France awaiting his appointment with French authorities.

"I have confirmed this with his lawyer, Manjit Singh, who is accompanying him to France. He has an appointment at 2pm French time which is about 8pm Malaysian time," he said.

First Malaysian to testify

According to Chua, Balasubramaniam is being given the honour of being the first Malaysian witness to testify in the corruption case, signifying the importance of his testimony which the MACC, he claimed, seems to have taken so lightly.

The private investigator was called in by the MACC to record his testimony but this failed because he refused to do so on Malaysian soil. The commission was then involved in

negotiations with Balasubramaniam's lawyers to meet in Thailand and then London.

However the negotiations fell through, with the commission finally resorting to sending Balasubramaniam (right) a set of questions to be answered in the form of an affidavit.

This, the MACC said, is because any testimony recorded by Balasubramaniam on foreign soil is not admissible under Malaysian law, so his affidavit will have to suffice in lieu of a face-to-face interview on Malaysian soil.

Both Chua and Mahfuz called for a royal commission to investigate the alleged technical failures and corruption in the Scorpene submarines' purchase.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/137075>