

MPs divided over Johari's position
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Should Deputy Internal Security Minister Mohd Johari Baharum be suspended, go on leave or resign pending the outcome of investigations by the Anti-Corruption Agency into an allegation that he had accepted a bribe and abused his powers?

A malaysiakini straw-poll among members of Parliament saw opinions divided, but the majority felt that action should be withheld until and unless guilt is established.

Johari has denied the claim that he was paid RM5.5 million to release two suspected criminals and that he abused his powers by releasing a third individual, described on an anonymous Internet posting as a triad leader. Police had detained the trio under the Emergency Ordinance.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told reporters that Johari could remain in office for the time being, but that action would be taken if warranted.

Most of the MPs contacted were in agreement with the premier's stance.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Azmi Khalid (BN-Padang Besar)

Johari should not resign, why should he resign? This is just news spread via the Internet by some irresponsible (person).

Anyone can accuse a person by using the Internet, so let the investigations take place before making any judgement or evaluation.

People should not judge based on what it is (posted) on the Internet. They must know how to evaluate (the situation) and not jump to conclusions.

Shahrir Abdul Samad (BN-Johor Bahru)

There are just rumours flying around on the Internet.

He just needs the investigations to take place. He does not need to take leave. If he takes leave, it would be assumed that he has been indicted.

Zaid Ibrahim (BN-Kota Bahru)

He does not have to step down just because of an allegation made over the Internet - it is unfair to ask him to do so.

Former Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir (BN-Kulim-Bandar Baru)

It is too early to jump to conclusions based on allegations on the Internet. Let the investigations be completed, and release the results as soon as possible.

Mah Siew Keong (BN-Teluk Intan)

To be fair to him, the investigation should be conducted as soon as possible. This must be done quickly because this has become a public interest issue.

It is vital for the outcome to be announced as soon as possible, to clear doubts.

Loh Seng Kok (BN-Kelana Jaya)

I don't think he should either be suspended or told to resign because these are just rumours spread over the Internet. Anyone can do that and it is not fair to him.

Let the investigations be completed to be fair to him. Whatever it is, just let the law take its course.

Deputy Internal Security Minister Foo Ah Kiow (BN-Kuantan)

Let the investigations be completed before anyone judges Johari.

Teresa Kok Suh Sim (DAP-Seputeh)

Rumours remain rumours until there is concrete evidence of guilt, He is an innocent person until proven guilty.

The investigations should be expedited because this concerns a matter of public interest.

Tan Kok Wai (DAP-Cheras)

He should at least resign pending the investigations, otherwise his integrity will be questioned by the people. The public will also have doubts about the prime minister's administration.

As a politician, he should show himself to be a respectable and disciplined figure.

Fong Poh Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah)

He should take leave because the allegation affects the prime minister's credibility and leadership.

Fong Kui Lun (DAP-Bukit Bintang)

Johari should take leave and let the investigation go on. He should declare his assets to the public and let the public decide whether or not he is involved in corrupt practices.

Chow Kon Yeow (DAP-Tanjong)

He should be suspended until the probe is over. It is a practice that, once someone is alleged to be involved in corruption, he or she must leave the position (until cleared).

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