

Dompok calls off meet with ACA chief, whistleblower
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The much-awaited meeting of a parliamentary committee next Monday to hear the case against the ACA director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor has been called off.

Parliamentary Select Committee on Integrity chairperson Bernard Dompok in a brief statement today said the decision to cancel the meeting was made after considering "the latest developments".

"The investigations are currently being handled by the police and the Attorney-General's Chamber," said Dompok, who is also a minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

"At the same time, Mohd Ramli (Manan, the whistleblower) has filed a suit against six parties that are relevant to the case," he added in the three-paragraph statement.

Apart from Zulkipli, the committee had also call in Ramli, who is an ex-ACA Sabah chief and the author behind a report that contained several explosive allegations against Zulkipli - ranging from corruption to a sexual crime.

Dompok said the decision to cancel the meeting was made today by the committee based on a "majority decision". The bi-partisan parliamentary committee comprises mostly BN parliamentarians.

Dompok could not be reached for further comment despite several attempts.

Pressured to back down?

Parliamentary Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang, also a member of the committee, in an immediate response expressed shock over the cancellation of the meeting and said he was unaware of the decision.

In a statement, Lim said he was informed by the media about the cancellation at about 3pm and followed by a phone call from a Parliament officer at about 4.40pm.

Lim questioned the "unilateral" decision to cancel the meeting made by Dompok as the opposition leader argued the decision to call in the duo was formally made by the committee on Feb 28.

"As the committee chairperson, Dompok must not buckle down to ulterior and improper pressures to unilaterally cancel the parliamentary select committee meeting on Monday to hear Zulkipli and Ramli on ACA corruption," he said.

The veteran politician wanted to know whether the committee's move to call in the duo was discussed at the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday and as a result, Dompok was "pressured" to cancel the meeting.

He pointed out both Zulkipli and Ramli have publicly stated their preparedness to appear before the committee as the duo said they have nothing to hide.

"This incident raises the impropriety of a cabinet minister heading a parliamentary select committee," Lim added.

Cancellation improper

He also countered one of Dompok's reasons to cancel the meeting on the ground that Ramli has taken legal action against six relevant parties in the matter.

"This is neither an excuse nor justification for the unilateral and unparliamentary cancellation of the meeting as the committee is not intended to be a court of law but has special responsibility to address the problem of integrity in the ACA," Lim argued.

He described the decision to cancel the meeting as "improper, defective and unparliamentary and should be regarded as null and void, and utterly invalid".

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