

Show us Zulkipli's file, PM urged
Malaysiakini.com
March 16, 2007
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The onus is now on Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to dig up and disclose the file on Zulkipli Mat Noor's appointment as Anti-Corruption Agency chief to prove his innocence.

In defiance of any knowledge, former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Wednesday that Zulkipli had a clean record when his file was given to the premier in 2001.

"You can go and see his file. It must be somewhere... (see if) they put in that file that 'this man is corrupt so please appoint him as the ACA head'. You think I will appoint him if that was the kind of report? I don't know (then). Now I know. They didn't tell me," added Mahathir.

Mahathir said from the reports given to him, he was under the impression that Zulkipli was clean and the right person to helm the agency.

He then made references to Abdullah and said that his name was being dragged through the mud in all these recent corruption cases - as part of a concerted effort by Abdullah - to "blacken my name".

Apart from the first appointment in 2001, Mahathir had also extended Zulkipli's tenure by offering him a one-year contract after the ACA chief reached his retirement in 2004.

Subsequently, the present Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi extended the contract on two occasions.

Zulkipli has come under intense fire in the past two weeks after he was accused by a former high-ranking ACA official, Mohamad Ramli Abdul Manan, of amassing properties and wealth beyond his means.

Malaysiakini spoke to several non-government organisations and civil society bodies on whether Abdullah should reveal the file on Zulkipli. Here are their responses.

Yap Swee Seng, Suaram executive director

Abdullah should open (Zulkipli's file) and make it public. There should be pressure placed on the PM to reveal it. (He should) come forward to show that Zulkipli is clean despite the pending investigations. The public need to know if Zulkipli's appointment was properly done.

We need to look at the actual recommendations for the investigation - whether Zulkipli is clean or problematic, or has to face prosecution.

P Ramakrishnan, Aliran president

I think after what Mahathir said, it appears that Zulkipli must have gotten a clear bill (to hold office). We are not interested in finding out who gave the clearance. Zulkipli's reputation now is tainted and those who cleared him must talk.

Corruption in the country is getting worse. People are losing confidence in the fight against corruption and the people are wondering if Abdullah can do it (fight corruption) to return the confidence level.

He should open Zulkipli's file so that we can know what kind of clearance he got to get the ACA DG post. Abdullah has to prove by his deeds and not by words. He must prove he is serious in fighting corruption.

Open the book and let all of us have a look at it.

Yeo Yang Poh, Bar Council chairperson

There is a need to investigate (Zulkipli) to find out the relevant facts. Of course, you will need genuine political will to combat corruption but there are other steps that need to be taken if the government is serious in combatting corruption.

For instance, the government can make the ACA independent and answerable to the Parliament.

We must look at the bigger picture. The problem with Malaysia is that we don't trust our institutions.

Say every time someone alleges corruption, we expect them to bare all. When in fact we could have credible institutions looking it the problem. This is a better way to combat the problem and so people would have confidence in the institutions again.

Ramon Navaratnam, Transparency International Malaysia president

It is important that Dr Mahathir's statement be justified. The only way to do so is to make all correspondence regarding Zulkipli's appointment public to keep the good name of the people involved.

I hope Abdullah would reveal Zulkipli's file in the public's interest. This is so that we have some revelation of the truth. The police and the ACA are investigating the issue but TI hopes they will expedite and investigation because the public is waiting with bated breath for the truth.

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