

ACA, too, needs, appointment commission
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The announcement of the Judiciary Appointment Commission by the PM should be lauded. It is definitely a big step forward and one that would put our judiciary system back at its rightful place. And it is also reported that there is already an initiative to make the ACA into an independent agency.

An independent ACA would complement an independent Judiciary Commission superbly in safeguarding a fair and just government, one that is transparent and free of possible Executive interference and encumbrance. This would require both institutions to be truly independent in order that political allegiance and patronage do not interfere with justice.

But the proposal that the PM would need to approve the appointments recommended by the Judiciary Appointment Commission (JAC) is unnecessary and this tends to taint its supposedly independent objective. Why this translucency? The PM should go for outright transparency all the way. As long as the JAC is made up of professionals from the legal fraternity such as the Bar Council, retired top lawyers/judges and the like, chances are any appointment recommended would be credible and respectable.

A truly independent ACA would function freely as well as proactively, without having to depend on people making reports in order to initiate investigations. Neither does the ACA require any police report to do so. To prevent abuse, approval to initiate any investigation need only come from its Director-General, or his deputy. Hence, in order for this to happen, ACA appointments should also be carried out as in the case of judges – by a truly independent ACA Appointment Commission.

If this materialises, it would bring about tremendous credibility to the country, as we can expect to hear no more of 'close one eye' cases and corruption in various forms will be greatly reduced, regardless of the name used.

Those appointed to both these institutions should be individuals of high integrity and credibility – individuals who will carry out their responsibilities as chartered in the agency's 'Vision' and 'Mission', which should include the phrase, 'without fear or favour'. And this will only happen when they do not need to patronise political bosses and those with political affiliation. They should be well-trained in all areas of commercial crime-fighting.

These are bold steps but they are part and parcel of our agenda for change in the recent general elections. On the part of the PM, though he has been accused of being responsible for BN's poor performance, making the above changes would at least salvage much pride and political mileage as well as him being remembered for one who has made Malaysia a much more respectable nation than before.

If there is one way in which he could redeem his 'Mr Clean' image, this is it. And history will remember him for this great contribution – a prime minister known for fighting corruption and upholding justice. To quote our honourable PM, then the rakyat will 'work with you'.