

Royal commission: Act against Dr M, five others
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The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the VK Lingam video clip has recommended that former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad be investigated under various laws for his role in the appointment of judges.
MCPX

Other luminaries to face investigation are former chief justices Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim and Eusoff Chin, senior lawyer VK Lingam, Umno secretary-general and former minister Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and business tycoon Vincent Tan.

zaid ibrahim parliament pc 080508 02This was revealed by de facto law minister Zaid Ibrahim in Putrajaya today after announcing the cabinet has decided that appropriate action would be taken against the said individuals.

In its 191-page report, the commission recommended that they be investigated under a slew of laws - Sedition Act, Official Secrets Act, Penal Code, Prevention of Corruption Act and the Legal Profession Act.

Zaid said the cabinet has agreed for the Attorney General's Chambers to institute immediate investigations against the six.

'AG will have to investigate'

the lingam tape the six key individuals 160508"The report is advisory in nature so (the AG) will have to investigate them later," he said.

Photocopies of several pages of the report were also distributed to the media which stated the commission's final analysis after considering all evidence:

"We are of the view that there was conceivably an insidious movement by VK Lingam with covert assistance of his close friends Vincent Tan and Tengku Adnan Mansor to involve themselves actively in the appointment of judges, in particular the appointment of Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim as President of the Court of Appeal, and subsequently as the Chief Justice."

The much-anticipated royal commission report was finally revealed by the minister after the media ran several speculative pieces on its findings.

Commission chairperson Haidar Mohd Noor submitted the report to the King last Friday.

Earlier, Zaid said the government has also decided to release the commission's report to the public.

The four-volume report will be sold at RM542.10 and be available next week from the government printers.

While volume one - which is the report itself - has only 191 pages, volume two containing

the notes of evidence is 1,187 pages long, while volume three contains all the statutory declarations submitted to the commission (513 pages) and the final volume contains the exhibits (998 pages).

'Gov't committed and serious'

In the brief press conference, Zaid also said: "The government is committed and serious about restoring the rule of law and bringing confidence back into the judiciary in making sure that the selection of judges and high officers are done in a transparent way so we can minimise the shortcomings and weaknesses in the past.

He added that the government is now in the process of preparing necessary laws for the establishment of the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC).

lingam tape 160508 report"The government also proposes to include the recognition of 'judicial power' as proposed by the commission," he said.

However, the royal commission is against the setting up of a Judicial Complaints Tribunal to look into complaints related to misbehaviour by judges and judicial officers.

Zaid later urged the media and public to allow the investigation process to proceed uninterrupted without undue pressure or prejudice.

In January, former Chief Judge of Malaya Haidar led a five-member commission to investigate the controversial video clip allegedly showing Lingam brokering judicial appointments with former chief justice Ahmad Fairuz over the telephone.

After conducting the inquiry for 17 days with 21 witnesses called, the commission took almost three months to come up with the voluminous report.

In a related development, the Prime Minister's Department today filed a police report against several newspapers for publishing details of the commission's report before it was made public.

The Star, New Straits Times, Berita Harian and Sin Chew Daily had earlier published reports revealing the commission's findings and recommendations.

Bar Council welcomes cabinet's decision

In an immediate reaction, the Bar Council welcomed the cabinet's decision to make public the commission's report.

bar council judiciary dinner 170408 ambiga"The public is entitled to know the royal commission's findings in full as well as the basis for them," said council's chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan.

She stressed that the attorney-general's investigations "must be carried out fairly, thoroughly and quickly, and in such a manner as to assure the public that there will be no cover-up".

"This is crucial particularly in light of the evidence at the inquiry, which showed that similar

investigations had been previously closed by the authorities without further action."

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