

Zaid: No probe on judge's expose
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De facto law minister Zaid Ibrahim today ruled out a probe into MCPX claims by Sabah and Sarawak High Court judge Ian Chin on executive intervention into the judiciary some 10 years ago.

zaid ibrahim pc 110608 02Zaid said that such a probe would be tantamount to a waste of public funds.

The minister instead suggested all such allegations could be avoided with the formation of the judicial commission proposed by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"An investigation would not reveal anything more than what we already know. In my view, we need to look at restoring the integrity of the judiciary," he told reporters at his office in Putrajaya.

"Another investigation, inquiry or commission will just reveal we have revealed before. I think we should move on and not waste more (of) taxpayers' money".

He also described Chin's allegation as "just another piece of information that is regrettable".

"It is a bad reflection on our country and judicial credibility. We have to move on. We have to rectify and make sure that these things do not happen again."

mahathir eusoff chin judge ian hn chinChin sent shock waves through the legal fraternity when he implicated former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former chief justice Eusoff Chin in having interfered with judicial decisions.

Chin said Mahathir had issued a veiled threat that judges could be removed if they issued rulings against his administration.

Mahathir has reserved comment, saying in a blog-post that he would respond "in due time".

To a question, Zaid said the cabinet had not discussed the allegation at their weekly meeting this morning.

Asked if he thought Chin did the right thing by revealing the startling allegations at the start an election petition hearing in Sarawak yesterday, Zaid was non-committal.

"I do not want to say whether it is right or wrong...it is not for me to say whether he should say it earlier or yesterday. The fact is that he said it."

Reinstatement of principle

To another question, Zaid said he was "not surprised" about the allegations, as he had heard similar stories of judicial interference previously.

However, it was the first time he has heard of a 'boot camp' where judges are indoctrinated with the notion that the government interest comes first in passing judgments.

"It is something that should not have happened. You don't tell judges what to do. That is very important."

On the veracity of the allegations, Zaid said he had no reason to doubt Chin's credibility unless the claims are challenged.

Asked what action can be taken against Mahathir should Chin's allegations be proved true, Zaid said it will be up to the relevant authorities to act.

lingam tape 160508 report "This is the same question that was posed when we published the (Lingam tape commission) report. This is for the authorities to find out. I can't say if he (Mahathir) had in fact done anything wrong," he said.

Other than the judicial commission, Zaid said he would propose to the government to restore the judiciary's statement of principle in Article 121 of the Federal Constitution.

"Before 1988, there was a statement of principle (recognising) that judicial power lies with the courts... It is a very significant principle that we need to recognise," he said.

He added that the amendments is likely be tabled at the next sitting of Parliament, and that the Judicial Commission Bill will be tabled "soon".

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