

**BN backbencher joins chorus for independent ACA**  
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**Fauwaz Abdul Aziz**

Outspoken Sabahan MP Abdul Ghapur Salleh (BN-Kalabakan) said he would support any move to place the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) under Parliament to strengthen its independence from the government of the day.

He cited the admission by Sabah Progressive Party (Sapp) former deputy president Raymond Tan a month ago that he (Tan) had asked the ACA not to act against party president Yong Teck Lee over allegations of corruption.

abdul ghapur sallehWhen debating the Supply Bill 2009 this morning, Abdul Ghapur said this has raised questions about the anti-graft body's effectiveness.

"Is the ACA free or not free? When the top (leader) says don't investigate, they don't investigate!" said Abdul Ghapur, who heads the Kalabakan Umno division.

"Is this possible? If he (Yong) is in the wrong, he must be arrested!"

Abdul Ghapur said this also strengthens the case to place ACA directly under the supervision of Parliament.

"If there is a move to make ACA responsible to Parliament, I would agree to it," he said.

The ACA's moves against Yong and other Sapp leaders were allegedly influenced by the Barisan Nasional (BN) government, to counter the party's threat to leave the ruling coalition. Sapp has since pulled out of BN and opted to become an independent party.

mic malaysia indian congressOn another matter, Abdul Ghapur criticised statements by MIC Youth leaders on satellite television station Astro Awani as these were critical of the government.

Abdul Ghapur said among the remarks made last Saturday were that BN has no "substance" in its policies and brings no substance to parliamentary discussions.

Attacking this, he said such outspokenness by members of a party that had lost a lot of its standing contrasts starkly with their acceptance of BN policies and actions at the height of MIC's power.

"During its time in BN, they were not brave enough to speak up. Now they are brave enough to criticise. This is what is called cowardice!" he said.

"When we are strong, when BN was strong and commanded 90 percent of the parliamentary majority, where were these MIC leaders? Now that they've lost (in the March 8 general elections), they speak out."

He also took a swipe at two other BN component parties MCA and Gerakan, which have similarly and suddenly found their voice after losing public support.

### **'Broadcast constructive criticism'**

Abdul Ghapur next questioned state-owned television station RTM's practice of muting criticism of the government when this is offered by BN backbenchers.

"Why are they scared? This is constructive criticism. There is nothing to be scared of," he said.

rtm radio televisyen malaysiaIf RTM continues to treat criticism as a no-go area, it will lose credibility, he noted, and viewers will then turn to other television stations for information.

He also hit out at RTM's preference for programmes and movies about pontianak (vampires) and tahyul (ghouls), over rational and constructive criticism meant to improve governance.

"Let us not talk of the opposition - the criticism by (BN) backbenchers, even if it is sometimes bitter, should be aired," he said.

"Don't be afraid...let it be aired so that people know that this government wants to correct the things that have gone wrong."

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