

## **Is Najib Committed In His Fight Against Corruption?**

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The Prime Minister, Najib Razak, made a most extraordinary election pledge yesterday when he promised more powers to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) if Barisan Nasional wins the next elections with two-thirds control of Parliament.

The question that immediately comes to mind is whether this pledge of more powers to MACC is to carry out a more effective fight against corruption or is it to enable the MACC to victimise Pakatan Rakyat leaders and activists as in the still unresolved case of the mysterious death of Teoh Beng Hock at the MACC headquarters in Shah Alam on July 16, 2009?

Such a pledge is extraordinary because any meaningful or serious proposal to give MACC more powers to carry out a more effective fight against corruption should not be contingent on a win by any party or coalition in the next general elections, let alone getting a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

On the specific proposal by the MACC advisory panel that an anti-corruption service commission be formed and be given powers to appoint and terminate MACC officers, which requires a constitutional amendment with two-thirds parliamentary vote, Pakatan Rakyat is prepared to support such a constitutional amendment in the meeting of Parliament next month if convinced that it is a step towards making the MACC more efficient, independent and professional.

The existence of separate commissions, for instance for the judicial and police services, have not been able to guarantee public confidence in the efficiency, independence, integrity and professionalism of the judicial and police services – evident from the establishment of the Dzaidin Police Royal Commission in 2004 whose 125 recommendations to ensure Malaysia has an efficient, incorrupt and professional world-class police service have still to be fully implemented after seven years and the continuing controversy over the series of judicial crisis of confidence starting with the 1988 sacking of the then Lord President, Salleh Abas and two Supreme Court judges in the dark days of Mahathir premiership.

If Najib is serious about anti-corruption, he should have addressed the issue why Malaysia under his premiership is perceived, both nationally and internationally, as even more corrupt than under the previous five Prime Ministers, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Razak, Tun Hussein, Tun Mahathir and Tun Abdullah.

Najib has yet to comment on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2011 released last December which showed that Malaysia has fallen to the lowest TI CPI ranking of No. 60 with the lowest CPI score of 4.3.

Based on the latest TI CPI 2011 ranking and score and available data going back to 1995, Malaysia under Najib is even more corrupt than under the two previous Prime Ministers, Mahathir and Abdullah.

What should concern Najib and all Malaysians is that from recent trends, Malaysia runs the risk of being overtaken by both Indonesia and China before 2020 in the annual TI CPI both in ranking and score unless Malaysia quickly bucks up and shows its seriousness on the anti-corruption front.

In the first TI CPI in 1995, Malaysia was ranked No. 23 out of 41 countries with a CPI score of 5.28.

Seventeen years later, after numerous anti-corruption campaigns, two major anti-corruption legislation, the "elevation" of the former Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) into Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the National Integrity Plan, the 1Malaysia Government Transformation Programme with massive infusion of public funds and increase of staffing, Malaysia has now fallen to the lowest TI CPI ranking in 17 years, viz: No. 60 with the lowest CPI score of 4.3.

In comparison, Indonesia was ranked at the very bottom of No. 41 in 1995 with CPI score of 1.94 while China was ranked No. 40 with a CPI score of 2.16 in 1995. Now Indonesia is ranked No. 100 with a CPI score of 3.0 in 2011 while China is ranked No. 75 with a score of 3.6.

At the annual average rate of Indonesia and China's improvement on TI CPI ranking and score in the past three years, compared with Malaysia's regression in CPI score in the past three years, Malaysia will be left behind by both Indonesia and China well before 2020.

How are Malaysians going to hold their heads high when the world perceive Malaysia as being even more corrupt than Indonesia and China before the end of the decade?

Is this the fate awaiting Malaysia in the TI CPI ranking and score before 2020?

Two weeks ago, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono boasted at a special briefing of foreign envoys in Jakarta that his administration had conducted the "best" and "most aggressive" anti-corruption campaign in Indonesian history, imposing "decisive measures against corrupt state officials without exception". As a result, "From ministers, governors, to regents and mayors, many have been tried for graft".

Can Najib make the same boast as the Indonesian President of having conducted the "best" and "most aggressive" anti-corruption campaign in Malaysian history with "decisive measures without exception" against political and government leaders?

What has Najib got to show on the anti-corruption front in his three years as Prime Minister when only four politicians were nabbed by MACC in 2010? Can Najib disclose how many politicians were arrested by MACC in 2011?

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