

Has Najib Issued A 'Blank Cheque' Apology?

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Yesterday, the Prime Minister Najib Razak extended an apology to the people on behalf of the Barisan Nasional for the coalition's mistakes in the last general election, which cost it several electoral seats and states including Kedah.

Najib said:

"I apologise for our mistakes prior to the 2008 general election. If we made mistakes in the past and the voters rejected us, we accept it.

"On behalf of BN, I apologise. We have learnt from our mistakes, and we aim and promise the people that we will make amends and bring them to greater heights."

I was immediately asked on the twitter: "accept or not" and my reply was: "Yes, should accept if Najib's apology for BN's past mistakes genuine. Is it genuine or just election gimmickry?"

I scoured the news reports to be able to say that Najib's apology should be accepted in good faith as he has identified and owned up to the BN's past mistakes for which he and the present BN would make amends, but unfortunately, there is nothing whatsoever to come to such a conclusion.

In fact, one should ask whether Najib has issued a "blank cheque" apology, signifying nothing as to enable all the past BN mistakes of abuses of power, corruption and lack of accountability to be repeated in even worse magnitude?

For instance, in the fight against corruption. Previous Prime Minister Abdullah had promised in the 2004 general election to end and reverse the tide of corruption which saw Malaysia's Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI) plunging from No. 23 placing in 1995 to No. 37 in 2003 with CPI score of 5.2 (10 being the best and 0 the worst).

Abdullah announced a five-year National Integrity Plan targeting at least 30th position in TI CPI 2008 and the score of at least 6.5.

In actual fact, Malaysia fell another 10 places in the TI CPI 2008 and was ranked No. 47 with a score of 5.1.

Najib's anti-corruption target under his 1Malaysia Government Transformation Programme (GTP) proved to be another abysmal failure – instead of achieving the target to increase CPI score from 4.5 to 4.9 in 2010, the score plunged to lowest-ever 4.3 with CPI ranking at its worst of No. 60 in the 2011 TI CPI.

Is Najib apologizing for Malaysia becoming increasingly corrupt not only under the Mahathir and Abdullah years but also under his premiership which will be completing its third year next month?

Is Najib apologizing for the past and present corruption under Barisan Nasional, to the extent that Malaysia now runs the risk of losing out to Indonesia and China on the anti-corruption front in the TI CPI both in ranking and score before 2020?

Just before he became Prime Minister, Najib conspired and plotted the illegal and undemocratic power grab in Perak toppling the democratically-elected Pakatan Rakyat Perak state government headed by Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin as Mentri Besar.

Will Najib apologise for this illegal power grab in Perak?

Mahathir's 22-year premiership was dogged by a catalogue of financial scandals costing an estimated loss of RM100 billion to the country. Up to now, Malaysians are still paying for these financial scandals, as in the third and latest RM840 million bailout of former Malaysian Airlines (MAS) chairman Tajudin Ramli with his out-of-court settlement with Danaharta and GLCs.

Is Najib apologizing for this?

In the past three decades, the independence, impartiality, integrity and professionalism of major national institutions, whether civil service, judiciary, police, elections commission or anti-corruption agency were seriously compromised by executive interference and usurpation.

Any Najib apology?

Perhaps we should give the Prime Minister an opportunity to enumerate the past BN mistakes for which he is extending an apology and undertaking not to repeat them, so that Malaysians can conclude whether Najib's apology is genuine and sincere or otherwise.

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