

Cops must be paid more than civil servants

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KUALA LUMPUR: The salary of Malaysian policemen must be higher than that of civil servants which is the way it is practised in developed countries like United States, Britain and Japan, former Inspector-General of Police Tun Hanif Omar said.

"I have been advocating this for a very long time. It is a question of recognising the enormous responsibility and role of our policemen.

"It is a matter of 'if you pay peanuts you get monkeys'. How can one survive on RM675 in Kuala Lumpur in this time and age?" he asked.

Hanif, who was Malaysia's longest-serving IGP and also a member of the Royal Commission on the police force, said only with a better salary scale would the force be able to attract dedicated people.

He said the Government might face some problems if it were to increase the salary across the board and suggested that the increase be differentiated between police officers who do real policing work and those who don't.

He explained that police officers who were not doing real policing job should be paid less than those who were in the front line of policing and risking their lives.

"Whatever it is I believe our policemen must be better paid and once they get the pay rise they must change and deliver," he added.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang has expressed his support for the new Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan's proposal to revise the police salary.

"He can expect full support from MPs regardless of party. The last salary revision for the police was 10 years ago.

"It is scandalous that low-ranking policemen including those with diplomas and degrees are living close to the poverty line which can only spawn corruption," he said in a statement yesterday.

While commending Musa for highlighting the issue, Lim said this should now be accompanied by a single-mindedness to root out corruption and abuse of power in the police force.

"The litmus test of this commitment is the speedy establishment of an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC).

Human Rights Commission of Malaysia commissioner Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said it's high time that our policemen earn better pay and have their working conditions reviewed.

"They have long been neglected compared to other civil servants."

He said compared to policemen elsewhere in the world "our policemen are lowly paid, considering the risk they are entrusted to and taking in line of duty.

He said going by the wages "many would not be able to make ends meet, especially those living in cities such as Kuala Lumpur."

He said it was important for the Government to consider the IGP's proposal.

MCA Public Services and Complaints Department head Michael Chong said he knew of many labourers who make much more than policemen.

He said if policemen got better salary, it could help curb graft among some of them as this is a fact of life that no one could ignore."

Chong said better pay would also encourage and boost the police morale to carry out better work.