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Give authorities space to investigate claims against PM

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Defence Minister Hishammuddin backs Najib's decision to take action against those making false allegations

by **AYU MUSA KAMAL**

DEFENCE Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein understands the severity of the allegations made in a report by *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) last Friday against Prime Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak and agreed that due to its magnitude, immediate action should be taken.

Hishammuddin said in a statement yesterday that just like the general public, he too wants to know the truth.

However, the minister stressed that the authorities involved in the investigation namely, Special Task Force, Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission, Bank Negara Malaysia and the police should

be given space to continue investigating this allegation.

Last Friday, a WSJ report claiming that Najib received a huge amount of funds pumped directly into his personal bank account shocked the nation, leading to criticisms from the public and calls for him to "take leave" from the prime ministerial post while investigation takes place.

Najib had since denied the allegations made against him, stating he had never taken funds from 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) or any other entity for his personal interest, and described the false allegations as political sabotage to topple him.

The Umno VP reiterated his support for Najib and backs the PM's decision to take action against those who have been making false allegations.

Hishammuddin also urged those who made the allegations to come forward with strong evidence.

"This is vital because it

doesn't just involve the PM's dignity and credibility, but also Malaysia's image in the eyes of the world," he said.

In his statement, Hishammuddin called for all parties to remain calm and stop making assumptions with regards to claims made by several international media against Najib relating to the 1MDB issue.

"Don't act hastily and punish the PM based on assumptions because the allegations were all based on unverified media reports.

"Also, don't speculate, it will only make the situation worse," he said, adding that he has the utmost faith that those involved will conduct the investigation accordingly and in all fairness.

Meanwhile, Najib's Deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on Saturday had called for the PM's explanation on the matter.

"If he is confident that the accusations are untrue and

mere libel, then he should take legal action against those who made the allegations in order to clear his name and restore the government's credibility," he said in a statement on Facebook on the allegations.

"I am sure that the truth will prevail, based on the outcome of the investigation by the authorities," Muhyiddin said.

PKR VP Chua Tian Chang, or better known as Tian Chua, called for Najib to step aside as the PM while investigation is being carried out, stating that it would be a "waste of time" if he does not.

"We all understand the immense power vested in the PM. It will be a waste of time if the Attorney General or any task force continues to investigate 1MDB under the stewardship of Najib," Tian Chua said in a statement.

"If the PM has nothing to hide, he should be brave enough to at least temporarily step aside to allow for an independent inquiry."