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Analyst: PM's ultimatum a result of internal pressure

Analyst says it's 'PM's political provocation and test of loyalty of his ministers'

by **AZREEN HANI**

THE ultimatum given by Prime Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak to his Cabinet ministers following the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) controversy is a result of growing internal pressure in the government, said an analyst.

"I believe this is the PM's political provocation and test of loyalty of his ministers whom he had personally handpicked to be part of his administration."

"It also tells us the pressure

within his administration over this issue is real thus the need for the show of support by his counterparts," said Mohd Noor Yazid, a political analyst from Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

He said, although Najib might have picked his own people after the general election in 2013, the situation is different now as more revelations are made about the cash strapped strategic investment company.

"I believe what the PM wants from the ultimatum is a pledge of loyalty so that he can tell his critics he still has the support despite all the pressure."

Mohd Noor said the critics including former Premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and several Umno leaders have created a sense of discontent in

the government, leading to an internal pressure for more clarification on 1MDB and Najib's leadership.

"I think if the critics on 1MDB were solely made from the Opposition, it would not be as impactful. However, Najib is now facing a different scenario and he cannot continue with the silence anymore," said Mohd Noor.

It was reported on Monday that the PM had purportedly told the Cabinet ministers who were not with him to resign if they disagreed on 1MDB.

In responding to the report, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishamuddin Hussein tweeted he agreed with the call by Najib.

He, however, listed three conditions to revive 1MDB, which include rationalisa-

tion of the state investment firm, accountability and transparency.

Earlier Barisan Nasional backbencher chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Samad and Umno veteran leader Tan Sri Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah had called for collective responsibility from the Cabinet on 1MDB.

Umno Cheras division leader Datuk Seri Syed Ali AlHabshee said it is time for all ministers to respond to Najib's call and make a stand on the matter.

"The ball is in their court now. They should decide and make a stand on this. The people are waiting."

He added: "Of course had the PM thrown the same challenge to Umno leaders, I would be more than prepared with an answer. I think many would (respond) too."

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