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NGOs hand PMO memo on 1MDB

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Civil society coalition urges authorities to speed up sovereign fund's investigation

PUTRAJAYA: A coalition of 34 civil society groups delivered a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office, demanding that lawmakers speed up investigations into the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) issue.

Gabungan Tangkap MO1 spokesman Anis Syafiqah Md Yusof said the coalition handed in the memorandum out of concern over recent developments involving the US Justice Department's civil suits alleging siphoning of 1MDB funds.

Among others, the memorandum called on MPs to establish a Royal Commission of Inquiry into 1MDB, declassify the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) proceedings on 1MDB, and allow full and unimpeded investigations into the parties in the issue.

Five members of the coalition – National Human Rights Society (Hakam) president Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan, Bersih 2.0 steering committee chairman Maria Chin Abdullah, Suaram executive director Sevan Doraisamy, Malaysian Physicians for Social Responsibility representative Dr Roy McCoy and Oriental Hearts and Minds Institute representative K.J. John – handed the memorandum to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paul Low.

Speaking to reporters later yesterday, Ambiga said Low had agreed to raise the

1MDB issue in the coming Parliament meeting.

"We will send this memorandum to all ministers and MPs. We are asking the MPs to abide by their oath of office and do their part to get us out of this mess," she said.

Ambiga said though their complaints might sound "like a broken record", they insisted on pushing forward with the issue to show that "the rakyat will not take it lying down".

The memorandum was endorsed by 34 NGOs, which included Lawyers for Liberty, Community Action Network, Himpunan Hijau and Rise of Sarawak Efforts.

In July, the DOJ filed lawsuits seeking to seize properties tied to 1MDB, alleging that over US\$1bil (RM4.02bil) was misappropriated from the sovereign national fund.

The lawsuits, filed in Los Angeles, seek to seize assets "involved in and traceable to an international conspiracy to launder money misappropriated from 1MDB".

The lawsuits said the alleged offences were committed over a four-year period and involved multiple individuals, including Malaysian officials and their associates.

In a statement, Low said: "I duly take note of their views and assured them that I will bring their concerns to the attention of the Cabinet."