

No more turning a blind eye

Report misconduct or no promotion, PM warns civil service heads

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PUTRAJAYA: There will be no promotion for heads of departments or units if any misconduct or corruption by civil servants under them is left unreported, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In expressing his disappointment over persistent malpractices and misconduct over the last few years, the Prime Minister said there was an urgent need for department heads to shoulder greater responsibility and eradicate the culture of turning a blind eye to misconduct.

"If misconduct is clearly visible, why didn't the department head report it? Why didn't the unit chief know?"

"Sometimes I wonder, because these practices have been going on for years - it's impossible not to know.

"So, I will recommend to the Chief Secretary to the Government in our upcoming meeting regarding salary adjustments, where we will stipulate that a department head or unit chief will not be promoted if it is known that the system underneath them is corrupt and not reported," he said in his

speech during the Prime Minister's Department monthly assembly here yesterday.

Also present were Deputy Prime Ministers Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said he wants a decision regarding promotions to be made next week, with the method expected to be announced by the Chief Secretary to the Government and the Public Service Department director-general (DG).

"I hope you understand; if not, you can choose not to be a department head because the responsibility is greater. Tell the Public Service DG that (you) only want to work as an ordinary officer, (you) don't want to be a unit or department head," he said.

The Prime Minister said with such efforts, the responsibility to prevent misconduct lies not only with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) alone, but also with department

heads and unit chiefs.

"This is not just about saving the image and integrity of civil servants, but about saving our country.

"I want Malaysia to be known as a clean country, with minimal corruption," he said in reiterating his strident opposition to corruption and malpractices.

"I am not tired of repeating this. There have been improvements, and I applaud the MACC, the Inland Revenue Board and other authorities, which do not compromise with corruption.

"We would get angry if our child or grandchild steals their friend's pencil, but we allow it if we steal millions and billions.

"Why I (continue) to stress this is because (corruption) is still happening," said Anwar as he reminded civil servants to play their part in combating wrongdoing.

The Prime Minister added that although there are some improvements in the Auditor-General's Report compared with previous years, more needed to be done to improve the country's situation.

Meanwhile, he urged civil servants, the majority of whom are Muslims, to instil the spirit of haj in their work practices towards

achieving excellence in their duties and to eradicate all forms of dishonesty.

In an immediate response, Cuepacs president Datuk Adnan Mat said he welcomed the announcement, adding that all heads of department should take appropriate responsibility to ensure there is no mismanagement, especially involving misconduct and corruption among the staff under their supervision.

"If implemented, the proposal will cultivate public servants who are constantly mindful of their responsibilities and the trust that they bear, especially (in ensuring that) those under their supervision always operate in accordance with best management practices," he said.

Cuepacs, Adnan added, hoped that all civil servants, regardless of rank or position, will view this step positively, especially to ensure that public services will be maintained at the highest standard.