

Putrajaya stands by refusal to charge A-G

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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 — Putrajaya has insisted it will not take action against Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail despite renewed allegations of corruption and fabricating evidence made against the country's top lawyer.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz said that last year's decision to close the door on the A-G's alleged involvement in Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's 1998 "black eye" case still stands.

"Same reply, same reply. I replied to (DAP adviser Lim) Kit Siang in Parliament before. The reply is the same," he told The Malaysian Insider when asked if Putrajaya would act on the latest allegations against Abdul Gani.

When asked to state if the government would take action against Abdul Gani's accusers, Nazri repeated, "Same reply."

In Parliament last December 14, the government side-stepped the damning accusations made by former investigating officer Datuk Mat Zain Ibrahim that Abdul Gani had falsified documents in the "black eye" case, brushing aside several open letters and appeals issued by the retired policeman..

Instead, Nazri had told the House that there was no need for Mat Zain to complain that the independent panel formed to investigate the claimed evidence fabrication had failed to clear his name in the incident.

This, said Nazri, was because Mat Zain had never been the subject of the panel's probe and had merely been called forth as a witness to testify.

"The MACC's (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) advisory board, though its letter to Datuk Mat Zain on July 23, 2009, had already stressed that there was no need for the independent panel or the MACC to clear Mat Zain's name, seeing as he was not the subject of the investigation in the first place," he said.

Nazri also said that the panel had been constitutional, despite Mat Zain's claim that the Solicitor-General had no right to appoint the members.

In his first open letter to Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar, Mat Zain had claimed that the right to appoint a tribunal only lay with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, based on the prime minister's advice.

Despite Nazri's response, Mat Zain continued his relentless pursuit to convince the government to charge Abdul Gani in court and, over recent months, penned more letters to IGP Ismail.

The former senior police officer also went a step further recently by accusing Putrajaya of admitting to Abdul Gani's role in allegedly falsifying evidence when Nazri appeared to back the independent panel's findings on the case.

He said with Putrajaya's endorsement, there was no longer a need to form a royal commission of inquiry or a tribunal to investigate Abdul Gani's involvement.

Mat Zain also claimed that Najib was aware of Abdul Gani's involvement as the prime minister had been briefed and was provided "complete evidence" in October 2008, when he was still the country's deputy premier.

Mat Zain said he had briefed Najib at the latter's Finance Ministry office in Putrajaya, adding that he had "assumed" the leader would take appropriate action once he took up the prime minister's post.

PAS recently stepped into the fray, demanding Putrajaya form a royal commission of inquiry (RCI) to investigate the numerous allegations of misconduct against Abdul Gani or prosecute the latter's accusers for issuing false accusations.

PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar asked why the government and Abdul Gani had chosen to ignore the allegations, which include several claims of corruption and evidence fabrication.

Failure to act on the accusations, he added, would only further tarnish the image, reputation and integrity of the Attorney-General's Chambers and the post of the Attorney-General, who serves as the country's highest-ranking public prosecutor.

"If the government fails to take any action within an acceptable timeframe, PAS will initiate a petition calling for the formation of an RCI and submit it to the Agong," Mahfuz told a press conference.

The PAS MP had also listed several other accusations against Abdul Gani such as claims made by blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin that construction company Ho Hup Bhd paid for renovations to the Attorney-General's house; the latter's purported relationship with Shahidan Shafie, an alleged proxy to former Malaysia Airlines (MAS) chairman Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli; and also his alleged role in the case of murdered Mongolian model Altantuya Shaaribuu.

Abdul Gani has denied all of Raja Petra's accusations and had his name cleared by the authorities.

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