

MACC demands list of land Taib owns - from opposition MP
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Just hours after an opposition member presented Parliament with a list of the land acquired in the timber-rich state by the family of Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, three officers of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) came a-calling.

They wanted that list.

"If I, an ordinary citizen, can get this information from the land office, why can't the MACC?" Bandar Kuching MP Chong Chieng Jen (pic) demanded to know.

He is one of the Sarawak-based opposition MPs who have trained their sights on the chief minister but are finding him a constantly moving target. Chong was scathing as he questioned the inability of the MACC to strengthen its case against Taib and his family.

He pointed out that the MACC has a special taskforce of 10 investigators to probe the alleged corruption. "If the so-called 10-man probe team are doing their job, there is no reason why they should not have these documents," he said.

This, he lamented, clearly showed that the MACC was dragging its feet, despite the fact that the probe into the chief minister's alleged exploitation of the state's wealth began in June 2011.

In a hard-hitting speech on Monday, Chong told Parliament that Taib and his family had amassed 24 plots of land in Sarawak worth about RM1 billion for a fraction of its market value, of which six lots – totalling 89.025 hectares – were prime land.

He produced documents showing which companies owned by Taib's immediate family held these lots. They were Polar Red Sdn Bhd, Radiant Lagoon Sdn Bhd, CMS Lands Sdn Bhd (a subsidiary of CMS Bhd), Magna Wide Sdn Bhd, Miracle Harvest Sdn Bhd and Worldsign Harvest Sdn Bhd.

The companies own 38,255.25ha of land bought from the state at a lower price. DAP Sibuluan MP Oscar Ling Chai Yew also weighed in on the Taib probe.

"The documents showed to the House on Monday is clear proof of Taib's misdeeds and is more than enough for MACC to take action against him," he added.

"This has been going on for far too long and calls for Taib to step down have also fallen on deaf ears."

But another DAP MP, Stampin's Julian Tan Kok Ping, has a different, more optimistic, take on the MACC visit to whistleblower Chong.

"Although they left it too late, the fact that MACC sought Chong out to get those documents from him is a good sign.

"But MACC has to buck up and be serious about this. People have long questioned this but have never dared to speak out until now," he said.

He called on the MACC to be transparent and provide a satisfactory answer to the rakyat as the evidence has all been presented.

"MACC has to show their professionalism in this case," he added.

It was reported earlier that the MACC, during the course of its two-year probe, had pored through more than 400 files and questioned and recorded statements from 20 people, who were believed to be involved in shady land deals.

They were also mentioned in a YouTube video released by an international corruption watchdog, Global Witness (GW) in March this year.

The video, entitled "Inside Malaysia's Shadow State", showed recordings of conversations between GW's private investigators and two of Taib's cousins.

MACC investigation division secretariat assistant commissioner Lim Bee Kean had said after the video linking Taib was released, a 10-men task force was set up and they are receiving help from the Attorney-General's Chambers as additional measures to beef up investigations. Taib, who has been in office for 32 years, has long been in the centre of controversy following allegations of abuse of power.

The powerful chief minister, however, had dismissed the allegations, calling the MACC "naughty", while maintaining that he would not be cooperating with them for not being upfront with him.

"They don't deserve my cooperation because they have been quite naughty," he was quoted as saying. – July 3, 2013.

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