

Political parties perceived to be most corrupt, says survey
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Political parties have overtaken the police as institutions perceived to be the most corrupt in Malaysia - a most "unusual" development - according to a survey done by the Malaysian chapter of Transparency International.

TI-M president Datuk Akhbar Satar (pic) admitted today that the result was unique to Malaysia as political parties in other countries were not perceived to be as corrupt as here.

"Yes, we don't see this happening in other countries. We are seeing this for the first time," he said after releasing the results of the first-ever Malaysian Corruption Barometer (MCB) 2014 in Petaling Jaya.

Of the 2,000 respondents surveyed, 45% of Malaysians perceive political parties to be the most corrupt, followed by the police (42%), public officials and civil servants (31%) and parliament and legislature (23%).

In last year's Global Corruption Barometer, 78% of Malaysians perceived the police to be the most corrupt in Malaysia .

The MCB survey also showed that the perception of the government's anti-corruption efforts has deteriorated, with 38% of Malaysians saying they are ineffective.

In view of this, Akhbar called on Putrajaya to "walk the talk", saying that the government needed to convince the public that their efforts to reduce corruption are paying off.

"Perhaps they must look back at the strategies. It is not wrong to obtain ideas from NGOs and the public on how to tackle corruption," he later said at a press conference.

"More work is needed by the government in order to achieve their KPI of 70% by next year."

The MCB findings also showed that 45% of the respondents had been asked to pay bribes in the past.

The highest incidence of bribery in the past 12 months is recorded for the police followed by registry and permit, with the most common excuse given being to "speed things up".

The willingness of the public to report incidents of corruption declined from last year's GCB results (79%) to 51% this year.

Most respondents who said they would not report these incidents admitted they are afraid that there would be negative consequences.

"People are afraid that action might be taken against them for reporting the incident. They are not sure if the Whistleblower Act can actually work," Akbar said.

The MCB, however, also revealed that the perception of corruption improved significantly from the 2013 GCB results, with 30% of Malaysians feeling that the level of corruption had increased in the past 2 years.

Last year, 39% of the respondents felt that corruption had increased.

An improvement was also recorded for the perception of corruption in the public sector, with half of the respondents saying it is a serious problem compared with the 58% last year.

Akbar also listed TI-M's recommendations to curb corruption, which included identifying and addressing the root cause of the problem in Malaysia and holding the corrupt to account without fear or favour.

"It is sad when political parties - being the driving force of democracy - are perceived to be the most corrupt institution," he added.

"The MCB's findings correlate to the administration errors, substantial waste of public funds and severe mismanagement revealed in the Auditor-General's Report."

Akbar said he would reveal the findings of the survey and make recommendations to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to raise the seriousness of the issue. – May 14, 2014.

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