

TI-M Urges PM to Address Threats in Esscom Caused by Corruption

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 9 (Bernama) -- Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) today urged Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to address with urgency issues of low integrity, graft and information leaks amongst security and defence personnel in the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom).

TI-M in a statement also called for investigations to be conducted transparently and the public be updated of the outcome as a threat to national security was a matter of public interest.

The statement said TI-M noted with concern the Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein's statement recently that corruption and leakages were among the causes of continued intrusions in the 1,400km-long coastal areas of Sabah under the Esscom.

"TI-M supports the defence minister in calling for an urgent need to address these weaknesses after reviewing Esscom's roles and functions to strengthen maritime security in the eastern part of Sabah covering four perspectives namely software, hardware, human resources and intelligence.

"TI-M strongly believes that national security must not be compromised at any cost, let alone by corruption in any form. All enforcement agencies under Esscom must work closely and together to fight not only corruption but also to protect and defend our sovereignty against intrusions," it said.

TI-M also called upon the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to act immediately and thoroughly to investigate any proof presented by Hishammuddin and Esscom that hints at corrupt practices.

"TI-M further calls for the immediate removal of personnel involved to nip corruption in the bud," the statement said.

It said that it was time for Members of Parliament from both sides of the political divide to further strengthen their oversight of the country's defense budget and focus on tightening the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the procurement of defense

equipment.

"In order to achieve greater transparency with the purchase of defense equipment, TI-M recommends that the Defence Ministry SOP for equipment procurement be based on open tenders," it said.

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