

No ban on 1MDB satire, parody, says MCMC
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Putrajaya has denied that it will clamp down on the use of parody and satire in social media, following its "advisory" yesterday warning users against spreading false news about the controversial 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

In a report in The Star, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) said the advisory was "misinterpreted", adding that there would be no action on those who used satire and comedy as it was fiction.

Part 7.3 of the MCMC Content Code, it said, states that false content is prohibited except when it comes to satire and parody as it was obvious to a user that it is a work of fiction.

"When was there ever a ban? There was never a ban. It was totally misinterpreted. It was just an advisory notice," MCMC strategic communications director Syeikh Raffie Abdul Rahman was quoted as saying.

In a Facebook posting yesterday, MCMC said it was an offence to share or spread news which contained false information about 1MDB under Section 211 or 233 of the Communication and Multimedia Act 1998.

"The public is advised to stop spreading modified pictures, unverified news or any speculation on the investigation into 1MDB through social media, including through the WhatsApp application," MCMC said on its Facebook page.

"If found guilty, the punishment is fine of not more than RM50,000 and/or jail of not more than a year. #1MDB #falsenews."

The warning comes following claims that billions from companies linked to 1MDB were allegedly channelled into Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's personal accounts.

The allegation is being investigated by a special task force made up of Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chairman Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed and Bank Negara governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz.

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) in a July 2 report said that US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) was moved among government agencies, banks and entities linked to 1MDB before ending up in the prime minister's personal accounts in five separate deposits.

Najib has denied taking funds for personal use but has not commented directly on the transfer of the money into his accounts. He has instead blamed former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for masterminding the latest allegations. – July 10, 2015.

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