

Don't meddle with PAC work, Nur Jazlan tells Shafee
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Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamad has ticked off Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah for suggesting that DAP lawmaker Tony Pua quit the bi-partisan panel, telling the Umno lawyer not to poke his nose into PAC's business.

Malaysiakini reported Nur Jazlan as saying that Shafee has no right to tell Pua, a well-known critic of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), to step down from the bi-partisan panel.

"He doesn't have the right to tell off PAC members who are members of the legislature, the third branch of the government and elected by the people," he was quoted as saying by the news portal.

In coming to Pua's defence, Nur Jazlan said the DAP's Petaling Jaya Utara (PJU) federal lawmaker had never used PAC's information on troubled 1MDB in his statements.

Instead, Pua had shone the spotlight on important matters related to the debt-laden state investment vehicle.

"I personally think he has helped to highlight the issue on 1MDB which the majority of Malaysians today believe the PAC will dismiss in favour of the government. We are working well as a team.

"Pua performs a dual role as a MP for PJU and a PAC member. And as far as I am concerned he has not used any information obtained from PAC hearings on 1MDB in his statements.

"Whatever information he uses in his statements are obtained from parliamentary answers and other sources," Nur Jazlan told Malaysiakini.

Earlier today, Berita Harian reported Shafee as saying suggested Pua quits PAC to ensure the current probe into 1MDB can be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

The Bahasa Malaysia daily quoted Shafee as airing his personal view by suggesting that Pua and PAC members, who are 1MDB's strident critics, are more suited to become witnesses in the inquiry instead.

He said it is important to accord justice to 1MDB without any prejudice from any quarters in relation to the ongoing PAC investigation.

"I've noticed Pua, as a PAC member, has issued a lot of statements which can affect investigations into the company.

"As such, I propose that he withdraw himself from PAC to return the public's confidence that the inquiry can be conducted fairly and transparently."

He said the call was made because, as a lawyer and supporter of justice, he does not want PAC to be seen as being unfair to 1MDB as the case has caught the public's attention.

"PAC members including Pua should be like judges in this case, and not by making accusations and making public statements. It is better they be witnesses if they want to issue such statements," he was further quoted as saying.

However, Nur Jazlan reminded Shafee that PAC is not a court of law.

"The PAC is not a court of law created by statute but it is a body that represents the voice of the country.

"Our main job is to gather information, get witness testimony, analyse and determine fact from fiction and then come out with a report based on the facts of the case.

"Right now, I think the majority of Malaysian have already formed a perception that there is something wrong with 1MDB because the issue has been left to fester in the public domain for too long and the PAC can help to clear the negative perception by writing a good report that is based on the facts of the case," he was further quoted as saying.

The news portal also quoted PAC deputy chairman Tan Seng Giaw as shrugging off Shafee's proposal.

"There are seven BN members and five opposition members in the PAC. If a member expresses extreme or unfounded statements, there are others members who give their views.

"Usually there is a consensus for each matter... there is a balance," Tan was quoted as saying.

Criticism has been mounting over the Finance Ministry's wholly-owned investment vehicle, established in 2009.

Scrutiny has grown more intense following whistleblower site Sarawak Report's recent exposés, which piled pressure on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and prompted opposition politicians, former and current Umno leaders, including former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and anti-graft bodies to demand a thorough investigation into the fund.

The Auditor-General is currently looking through 1MDB's books, with a preliminary report expected to be submitted to Parliament this month, while PAC started its investigation into the company last month. – June 25, 2015.

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