

Don't believe social media on 1MDB, Umno members told
The Malaysian Insider
Jun 25, 2015
By Diyana Ibrahim

Datuk Ahmad Maslan today urged Umno members not to believe information about troubled 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) that was spreading on social media, now that it had been revealed that such information had been fabricated.

The Umno information chief said the arrest of a former PetroSaudi Information executive by the Thai authorities for alleged blackmail and fabrication of information leaked to UK-based website Sarawak Report was proof that allegations of wrongdoing and dubious deals against the state investment vehicle were untrue.

"As Umno information chief, I ask Umno members to think three or four times before believing the news spread on social media, on which questions are now being raised about the allegations against 1MDB," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby today.

Ahmad said he supported the Communications and Multimedia Ministry's stance today to assist the police in investigating the leaks that had put 1MDB in a bad light.

He said investigations should not focus solely on Xavier Andre Justo who was arrested by Thai police, but on the masterminds behind the spread of false information.

Justo was arrested on Monday for alleged blackmail and fabrication of information stolen from his former employer, PetroSaudi, which had entered a joint-venture deal with 1MDB in 2009.

Justo is believed to have tampered and edited data and emails taken from PetroSaudi before leaking them to UK-based website Sarawak Report, from where other media picked up and published damning information about government-owned 1MDB.

Malaysian pro-government newspaper the New Straits Times (NST) had carried a report yesterday stating that documents leaked on 1MDB's 2009 business deal with PetroSaudi had been edited before they appeared on the Sarawak Report website.

NST had quoted an unnamed source from international cyber security firm Protection Group International (PGI).

1MDB had also issued a statement to note that initial investigations surrounding Justo's arrest showed that some leaked emails had been tampered with.

The information led to Sarawak Report publishing a series of documents detailing the PetroSaudi-1MDB joint venture in 2009, which raised questions about 1MDB's dealings and also the involvement of Malaysian tycoon Low Taek Jho.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi last night said his ministry had the power to cancel or revoke publishing permits if the media were found publishing false

information.

The minister had singled out The Edge and its owner Datuk Tong Kooi Ong for special mention. The Edge, a business weekly, has published several reports on 1MDB's dealings.

The Malaysian Insider is part of The Edge Media group which publishes The Edge. – June 25, 2015.

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