

The Edge suspended over false 1MDB reports, says Rahman Dahlan
The Malaysian Insider
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The Edge Weekly and The Edge Financial Daily were suspended because there was a "real possibility" that their reports on 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) were inaccurate, Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said today.

Rahman, who is the urban wellbeing, housing and local government minister, said Putrajaya could not take the risk of allowing The Edge to continue its possibly "irresponsible reporting", adding that it was duty-bound to protect Malaysia from political mayhem and economic instability.

But the investigations into 1MDB will continue even as The Edge remained suspended, the Barisan Nasional (BN) strategic communications director wrote on his Facebook today.

"The government suspended The Edge publications because there was a real possibility that the contents of their reporting were not authentic. If this possibility turns to be true then the impact on the government and the economic stability due to irresponsible reporting cannot be understated.

"Pending the outcome of on-going investigation, the best option for the government was to suspend them temporarily. Allowing them to continue publishing something so serious without absolute certainty on the authenticity of the data used would be wrong," wrote Rahman.

He said there were too many "what ifs" involved in The Edge's case to allow it to continue publishing, including the possibility that The Edge lied, that the data was not authentic, and the plan to topple the government, as alleged by the publication's source, Xavier Andre Justo, was true.

Rahman said the "consequences are unimaginable" if this was proven to be true.

"Given the dramatic turn of events, we could not just simply swallow whatever excuse The Edge is saying now. The Edge didn't expect Justo to be caught, let alone expect him to spill the beans. They are now clearly desperate to avoid legal tussle.

"Therefore suspending them temporarily is the right decision. The government has the obligation to protect the nation and the people from political mayhem and economic instability."

He denied that the move was to suppress the investigation into 1MDB, adding that the probe by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), auditor-general, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the police and Bank Negara Malaysia was gathering steam by the day.

Rahman said the PAC probe into 1MDB would allow the state investment firm to

answer questions posed directly by the members, including its most strident critic, DAP lawmaker Tony Pua, through a systemic procedure that was fair and professional.

"PAC is the best opportunity for 1MDB to reveal their side of the story. For far too long, The Edge, Sarawak Report and others had a field day raining accusations on them."

He urged the public to trust the official investigation, and asked why they were more prepared to place their confidence in The Edge.

Rahman said that The Edge was already mired in controversy, given that Justo had accused it of trying to topple the government, and the publication had also admitted to misleading the former PetroSaudi International director to obtain the documents from him.

"Once a media organisation, now matter how much you adore it, starts using illegal means to obtain information to justify giving you news, red flags will be up everywhere.

"Their independence will be compromised and their motive will be in question. Nothing is more devastating to a media organisation than taking for granted the trust of their readers. In no time the reputation of the media will be in tatters."

The Home Ministry on Friday suspended the publishing permits of The Edge Weekly and The Edge Financial Daily for three months beginning tomorrow.

A letter from the ministry stated that the papers' coverage of 1MDB was "prejudicial or likely to be prejudicial to public order, security or likely to alarm public opinion or is likely to be prejudicial to public and national interest". – July 26, 2015.

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