

Gani's removal in midst of 1MDB probe fans Najib conspiracy theories, say critics
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The abrupt removal of Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail as Attorney-General will only strengthen the "conspiracy theory" that the prime minister, who is being investigated over the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal, is determined to stay in office, said a think-tank.

Stressing that the removal of Gani was unacceptable, especially since he is part of the special task force currently investigating 1MDB's operations, Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) head Wan Saiful Wan Jan said the move would raise a lot of questions about the intention behind what he termed as Gani's "sacking".

"Tan Sri Gani's service was supposed to end in October anyway so there is no reason for this early sacking. People are already talking about a potential desperate conspiracy by the prime minister to stay in office.

"This action, unfortunately, strengthens the conspiracy theory and further weakens the moral authority if Najib is to stay in office," he said in a statement in referring to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

He said removing Gani would not resolve anything and instead, invited more questions.

"I am now worried if other members of the special task force investigating 1MDB would be put under pressure by the top. And would critical cabinet members be sacked, too?"

He acknowledged that there may be potential conflict of interest in the role of Attorney-General and public prosecutor but stressed that it should be resolved by reforming the system, not by sacking the A-G.

Federal Court judge Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali was named the new A-G today, replacing Gani who is reportedly suffering from a kidney ailment, said national news agency Bernama in quoting Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ali Hamsa.

Meanwhile, Johor PKR deputy chief Jimmy Puah Wee Tse described the sudden replacement, which coincided with an impending Cabinet reshuffle, as "shrouded in mystery".

The Bukit Batu assemblyman said it was unusual for top civil servants to be replaced months before their retirement date and speculated that it could be due to Gani's participation in the special task force which had been arresting suspects allegedly connected to 1MDB.

"The task force has started arresting several persons with ties with 1MDB and rumour

has it, more senior and well-connected persons will soon be arrested to assist the investigation.

"No doubt, one can only conclude that this has incurred the wrath of the prime minister and quite possibly the revelation of findings from the task force could lead to an unfavourable situation for the PM."

He expressed hope that the task force would continue to discharge its duties without fear or favour as the nation was watching.

Earlier this month, WSJ and whistle-blower website Sarawak Report revealed that up to US\$700 million (RM2.67 billion) was allegedly transferred from state-owned funds into two bank accounts under Najib's name with AmBank in early 2013.

The prime minister, however, has denied ever taking any funds from 1MDB for "personal gain" but has not commented directly on the fund transfers. His accounts which allegedly received the funds have since been closed.

Following this, a special task force was formed to investigate 1MDB as well as WSJ's claims that billions of ringgit were transferred from other companies linked to the fund into Najib's personal accounts. – July 28, 2015.

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