

1MDB probe by task force should be without interference, MACC says
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The ongoing investigations into the controversial 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) by the special task force should be conducted in an independent manner without any interference or pressure from any third party, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) five independent oversight panels said today.

In a statement, the five panels said that members of the task force, which includes the Attorney-General's Chambers, the Royal Malaysian Police, Bank Negara Malaysia and the MACC, should be allowed to conduct the probe without fear or favour.

"The five independent oversight panels of the MACC want the ongoing investigation of issues relating to 1MDB to be conducted in an independent, transparent and professional manner without any interference or form of pressure from any third party on the four agencies which make up the Special Task Force.

"In this matter, we strongly feel that it is highly pertinent to ensure that the integrity of the MACC as an independent anti-corruption commission is to be maintained and shall not be compromised.

"The MACC must be seen as an independent commission entrusted to execute the plans and carry out its responsibilities in line with the public's expectations," they said.

Speculations have been rife that the abrupt removal of Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail as Attorney-General yesterday was so that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is being investigated over the 1MDB scandal, could stay on in office.

Federal Court judge Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali was named the new A-G to replace Gani.

The five panels today urged the new A-G to provide "clear updates" on developments in the investigations so as to prevent negative perceptions of the public towards the agencies in the task force.

"This is important in view of the fact that the MACC's task is focused only on issues related to SRC International, a former subsidiary of 1MDB, while the 1MDB is being investigated by the other bodies."

They also called on the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to make public the interim report by the auditor-general on 1MDB, citing public concern in the case.

"It is important for the PAC to make public the findings of the auditor-general's report on the 1MDB as soon as possible," they said.

"By the same token, all other reports on investigations by the other enforcement

agencies must also be made public, to restore public confidence in the investigations and the agencies concerned."

The 1MDB interim report was forwarded to the PAC on July 9 even as the bipartisan panel conducts its own inquiry into the state investment fund.

Many, including opposition leader Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, have urged Putrajaya to declassify the contents of the report following conflicting claims about its contents.

Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Datuk Ronald Kiandee, however, has said that Parliament's Standing Orders do not allow the report to be made public until it has been tabled in Parliament.

The chairmen of the five panels are Tan Sri Abu Zahar Ujang (Special Committee on Corruption), Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim (Anti-Corruption Advisory Board), Tan Sri Hamid Bugo (Operations Review Panel), Tan Sri Wilson Baya Dandot (Complaints Committee) and Tan Sri Johan Jaaffar (Consultation and Corruption Prevention Panel).

The five also vowed MACC's commitment in facilitating and expediting an independent investigation without intervention from any third party, adding that those found responsible for any offence will be brought to book.

"The panels assure the public that the MACC will facilitate and expedite an independent, transparent and professional investigation without the pressure and intervention from any party.

"In concluding the investigation, should there be evidence of any offence under the law, the relevant enforcement agencies must take appropriate action as provided under the law including by the MACC in accordance with MACC Act 2009.

"In view of current developments in the country, the panels strongly urge that the investigations be concluded in the shortest time possible," they said.

The special task force was formed to investigate 1MDB and claims that billions of ringgit were transferred from other companies linked to the fund into Najib's personal accounts.

Wall Street Journal and whistleblower website Sarawak Report reported 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. – July 29, 2015.

Source:

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