

Why so afraid of Khairuddin, Ambiga asks Putrajaya
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By Anisah Shukry

The six-day remand for sacked Umno leader Datuk Khairuddin Abu Hassan is an abuse of power by Putrajaya, and has turned Malaysia into a global laughing stock, says Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan.

The former Bar Council president today said the remand was to punish Khairuddin, and questioned what crime the former Batu Kawan Umno division vice-chief had committed.

"I'm appalled that he's remanded for six days. Remand is not supposed to be punishment. I think it's a total abuse, holding him for six days.

"Why? Is it because he's going overseas to present some documents to foreign agencies? Why are you so afraid?" Ambiga said to reporters on the sidelines of the Malaysia Freedom Summit 2015 in Petaling Jaya.

Yesterday, a magistrate allowed police to hold Khairuddin in custody until Thursday.

He is being investigated under Section 124 of the Penal Code for activities detrimental to parliamentary democracy, his counsel Matthias Chang said.

But Ambiga believed that such a charge would not stick in court.

"They equate the prime minister with parliamentary democracy. Sorry but that's not the definition of parliamentary democracy.

"It's a total abuse of that provision as well and the abuse must stop."

She said the string of arrests against those critical of the government, as well as the scandal surrounding Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, had ruined Malaysia's reputation.

"Our image is really bad overseas. The country is a laughing stock," said Ambiga.

"You go overseas, people are asking, 'What's wrong with your country?' They can't believe it. There was so much promise. Malaysia showed so much promise."

Khairuddin's arrest on Friday evening has made international news, with The New York Times reporting yesterday that he was to meet agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on Monday.

Khairuddin was supposed to leave for the United States on Friday morning together with Chang but both were stopped from leaving the country by immigration officials at

the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Khairuddin, who was sacked from Umno after he was declared a bankrupt, said in his Facebook posting on Friday that police wanted to question him for handing in evidence related to the 1MDB scandal to the Swiss attorney-general's chambers.

Khairuddin handed the evidence to the Swiss authority on August 20, and urged it to investigate the debt-laden state investment arm's activities involving Swiss and international banks.

He insisted that he had only acted in the country's best interests, and that he had the locus standi to lodge a report with Swiss authorities.

But, Putrajaya accused Khairuddin of lodging "false and politically motivated police reports" and pushing the same agenda as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has been incessantly calling for Najib's resignation. – September 20, 2015.

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