

Without MACC, new task force lacks bite, says Transparency International
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The absence of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has rendered the new task force investigating 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) toothless, Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) said today.

The anti-graft watchdog said MACC's removal from the National Revenue Recovery Enforcement Team (NRRET) shows that authorities are manipulating investigations into the debt-laden state investment fund and the prime minister's personal accounts.

This was because there was no apparent reason to exclude MACC in the task force, since the case involved alleged offences of corruption and abuse of power.

"How more blatant can one get in manipulating how proper probes and investigations should be done to one's own benefit and preference?" TI-M president Datuk Akhbar Satar said.

"It is plain to all that without the MACC, this so-called probe team lacks bite (and maybe even relevance) to resolve the 1MDB issue and the PM's 'personal accounts' issue."

He also questioned the role of the new Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali in the task force, after it was reported that he is leading the new team.

Akhbar said in the earlier task force, the attorney-general did not control investigations, but only gave legal input and advice on the laws surrounding the probe.

"So one also now begins to question why the new A-G is taking a leadership role in the task force. Does he determine what should be investigated and what should not and how the investigation is to be carried out?"

He said the task force should consist of the right enforcement agencies and be led by someone with "no political affiliation, no nonsense and has an outstanding record for good governance".

He also urged the government to not interfere in MACC's investigations into SRC International and the US\$700 million (RM2.6 billion) deposited into Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's accounts.

NRRET reportedly comprises five agencies: the Attorney-General's Chambers, Bank Negara, the police, Customs Department and Inland Revenue Board.

The original task force was disbanded in August, soon after Apandi took over Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail as attorney-general.

Some members of the task force were subsequently hauled up for questioning by Bukit Aman under Section 124 of the Penal Code for activities detrimental to parliamentary democracy. – August 24, 2015.

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