

## **Rosmah and Permata decline deferred award**

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**By FMT Reporters**

**In a statement issued by the PM's press secretary, both the PM's wife and Permata want to avoid further distraction.**

PETALING JAYA: Rosmah Mansor and Permata will not accept any award from a US body.

This is to avoid further “distraction from work for the Malaysian children”, said a statement by Prime Minister Najib Razak’s Press Secretary Tengku Sariffuddin Ahmad.

He said Permata, Rosmah and the Malaysian Government had never applied for the award in the first place.

Rosmah was earlier reported to be set to receive the “Lead by Example” award on behalf of Permata.

“The priority of Permata and Datin Seri Rosmah will always be the programmes that have had a positive impact on tens of thousands of young lives,” the statement read.

Rosmah, who is the prime minister’s wife, is also Permata’s patron.

Tengku Sariffuddin went on to slam critics who attempted to politicise the efforts of those trying to improve the lives of children.

He expressed regret that those who wanted to bestow the award had given in to the “smears and insinuations” of some who were against Malaysia, the government and the prime minister.

“Those behind this politically-motivated campaign care nothing for the damage caused by these false allegations to Permata, its staff and all the young people they have helped and cared for.”

However, he said that neither Permata nor Rosmah will be distracted by the attempts of such quarters.

Yesterday, the New York Times reported that an award, supposed to be received by Rosmah, was cancelled at the last minute, following questions over the source of Permata’s funds.

The organiser said that it was not aware of any specific wrongdoings in relation to Permata's funding, but did not have enough time to vet Permata and was being cautious.

Tengku Sariffuddin confirmed that Permata is wholly funded by the government under an allocation transparently included in the annual government Budget and approved by Parliament.

"All expenditures are in accordance with government financial procedures.

"This is not only a matter of public record, but could have been immediately explained had we or Permata been asked before the award deferment."

Sariffuddin said Professor Tudor Parfitt, Chairman, of the Academic Advisory Board of the Organising Committee, had stated that the award would be deferred to 2017 because of what he called "interventions" from the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times regarding the funding of Permata.

The award presentation ceremony will be held at the "A Tribute to Heroes in the Global Campaign Against Violent Extremism" event on Sept 22 at the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York.

A spokesperson for the event, Andrew Beck Makovsky, told FMT yesterday that the event is being organised by the Antiquities Coalition Founder and its chairman, Deborah Lehr, with the help of six other women co-hosts.

He said the event will honour close to a dozen individuals and organisations from the US, Iraq, Kenya, South Sudan, Nigeria and elsewhere, who have worked in different fields — from education to protecting cultural heritage — against violent extremism.

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