

Umno, BN the ones panicking over DoJ suit, says PKR

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PKR MP Wong Chen says the majority of Malaysians have lost confidence in the government over the 1MDB scandal and are not even shocked by the 'obscene' revelations.

KUALA LUMPUR: It's Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN) politicians, not the people, who are panicking over the latest civil lawsuit lodged by the United States Department of Justice (DoJ) concerning 1MDB, says Kelana Jaya MP Wong Chen.

"So I will disagree with Azalina (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Azalina Othman Said). Normal people are not panicking.

"Instead, I think Umno and BN politicians are panicking," he told FMT.

"This is clear because it's been almost six days now since the DoJ's latest lawsuit, and the majority of prominent cabinet members have not made any public statement."

A handful of ministers have spoken out on the DoJ's suit since it was filed last Thursday.

On June 18, Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak said a large part of the DoJ's statement dwelt on what was happening internally in Malaysia, and an even larger part had no relevance to the subject of whether a crime had been committed on US soil as alleged.

"The main issue here is not the US or the DoJ but that they are quoting from the complaint that they received.

"So the issue here is who are the parties who lodged that complaint with the US DoJ?" he wrote in a blog post.

That same day, Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein challenged the DoJ to press charges against those it accused of being involved in the alleged embezzlement of 1MDB funds.

Hishammuddin, who is also Umno vice-president, said this would be the right thing to do if the "irresponsible" DoJ actually had proof to back up its allegations.

On June 20, meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Abdul Rahman Dahlan said the DoJ should not have mentioned the purchase of diamonds by the wife of "Malaysian Official One" (MO1) if it had no plans to seize the items.

According to the DoJ filings, Malaysian businessman Low Taek Jho, better known as Jho Low, had purchased a 22-carat pink diamond necklace worth US\$27.3 million for the "wife of MO1".

Yesterday, Azalina urged Malaysians not to panic over the DoJ lawsuit and expressed her disappointment that people were so quick to believe it.

"When America said something happened, there was no examination made, and we become chaotic and believe the allegations," she told reporters when asked on the issue after opening the Legal Aid Convention.

According to Azalina, every country had its own legal system, including the US and Malaysia.

"To me, the DoJ is the American system. It's up to that country. It is a civil matter.

"That is their right, we have our own way," she said.

Wong Chen said the majority of Malaysians had lost confidence in the government when it concerned 1MDB, and were in fact in a state of "fatigued stupor" over the scandal.

The PKR lawmaker added that people were no longer shocked by the "obscene" details revealed by the DoJ suit.

The DoJ has filed two civil forfeiture suits against assets worth US\$1.8 billion (RM7.7 billion) that it claims were paid for with funds embezzled from 1MDB, making it the largest action brought by the DoJ's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative.

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