

MACC coy on probe over RM9.5 million payout claim

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Chief commissioner Dzulkipli Ahmad says the agency will see 'how the situation goes'.

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is tight-lipped over whether the agency will investigate claims by an online portal that a lawyer appointed to represent the public prosecutor for a case had received RM9.5 million.

“We will see how the situation goes,” its chief commissioner Dzulkipli Ahmad said today.

“I was told that police reports were lodged,” he told reporters tersely after distributing “bubur lambuk” at the Presint 3 Ramadhan bazaar here.

Last Thursday, the portal published an article alleging that the senior lawyer had received the payment from Prime Minister Najib Razak.

It claimed that the money was paid from a 1MDB slush fund account previously linked to Najib, who is also the finance minister.

PPBM Youth chief Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman lodged a police report on the allegation on June 2.

He said a public prosecutor is not supposed to take money “at any cost” from the prime minister as that would be a conflict of interest.

He said if true, the allegation could warrant contempt-of-court action because a public prosecutor should not be paid directly by any party that has vested interest in a case.

PKR Youth also lodged a report today and urged the lawyer to take leave from his duties.

FMT’s attempts to contact the lawyer were unsuccessful although several messages sent to his WhatsApp were blue-ticked as read.

Malaysian Bar president George Varughese also said on June 2 that police must investigate reports lodged on the matter.

He added that it was too early for the Bar to refer the lawyer to the Disciplinary Board (DB) because there was insufficient evidence to show he committed misconduct.

On June 3, the DAP's Bukit Gelugor MP Ramkarpal Singh called on Najib and the lawyer to take immediate legal action against the portal to clear their names and to stop further publication of the matter by way of an injunction.

He said Section 379 of the Criminal Procedure Code allowed for the lawyer to be appointed for a specific task, and required his remuneration to be sanctioned by the finance minister from public funds.

He said the portal's allegation suggested that the lawyer may not have been remunerated according to the provisions of Section 379, but was instead paid from an account belonging to Najib himself.

Section 379 stipulates: "The advocate shall be paid out of the public funds such remuneration as may be sanctioned by the minister of finance and while conducting such prosecution or inquiry, or appearing on such criminal appeal or point of law reserved, shall be deemed to be a 'public servant'."

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