

Malaysia to contact several countries to recover 1MDB money - Dr Mahathir

BERNAMA

16/05/2018

PUTRAJAYA, May 16 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Government will contact several countries to recover the allegedly misappropriated funds from 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said it was important for the government to recover the remaining money in Switzerland, Singapore, the United States and perhaps in Luxembourg, with an estimated of US\$4.5 billion in the United States.

"In the past, there was no confession from Najib's (former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak)

government that the money came from 1MDB. No one confessed that it was Malaysian money, so no claim was made.

"The amount is quite big and will help us settle some debts," he told a press conference at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here today.

Dr Mahathir said the focus on corruption was important especially 1MDB as well as the money that had been misappropriated by the previous government.

The Prime Minister said he had been briefed by the police and Auditor-General Tan Sri Dr Madinah Mohamed and read the audit report which had been declassified as an open document.

"We will take action and, if necessary, we will lodge a police report. If we can make an arrest, we will arrest those guilty. For this, there is no difference between the people to be charged," he said.

Yesterday, Madinah in a statement said that the audit report on 1MDB, which was tabled to the Public Accounts Committee on March 4, 2016, had been declassified.

Dr Mahathir said it was up to the police to call Najib to facilitate the investigations into the 1MDB.

Asked whether there is sufficient evidence to prosecute Najib, Dr Mahathir said if the evidence was sufficient, action could be taken.

To a question whether Najib would be placed under house arrest, the Prime Minister said Najib was just not allowed to travel abroad.

On whether Najib was given immunity, Dr Mahathir said: "We will follow by the rule of law and the law applies to everyone irrespective of being a prime minister."

Asked if the present government would honour the 1MDB debts, he said: "Yes we have to. If the debt implicates the government, we have to pay. Otherwise we will be sued and made bankrupt."

In another development, the Prime Minister said any arrested person would not be questioned until 4 or 5 am like before.

"I want to explain that the elements of torture and so on, cannot happen. They need to be questioned within a reasonable period and not (until) 4 or 5 am or kept in a dark room.

"There is a lot of stories that (people) being arrested and tortured, and if there is death, we will hold an inquest as stipulated under the law," he said.

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