

Rahman: Report abuses via proper channels

Civil servants still have right to report wrongdoing or corruption

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PUTRAJAYA: Asking civil servants to protect government secrets does not mean corruption will be covered up, said a cabinet member.

Minister of Urban Wellbeing, Local Government and Housing Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said civil servants still have the right to report wrongdoing or corrupt acts but it has to be done through proper channels.

"As civil servants, it is important to protect the secrets of the government. But this does not mean it denies one the right to report corruption or misuse of power.

"There are many ways to report any corruption within the civil service. Ministries have an integrity unit which will investigate complaints of misconduct by civil servants.

"There is also the public complaints bureau. If it is a serious matter, there is the MACC where anyone can directly lodge a report on corruption," said Abdul Rahman, referring to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

He was speaking after his ministry's monthly assembly here yesterday.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali was recently reported to have said that his Chambers was looking into amending the Official Secrets Act 1972 to punish those who leak official secrets, including civil servants,

the public and media practitioners who refuse to disclose their sources.

Abdul Rahman said confidential government matters such as meeting minutes should always be kept secret.

"The discussions made in a meeting lead to an eventual outcome. The outcome is the most important thing, not what is discussed. After all, the outcome is agreed by a general consensus," he said.

The minister reminded those who wanted to lodge reports with the MACC, not to disclose it to the public or the press until there was a charge, because it could taint the accused's reputation.

"I would like to remind people that Section 29 (4) of the MACC Act does not allow anyone who lodges an MACC report to reveal it to the public until there is a charge.

"There have been cases where individuals or groups brought the press along with them when they lodged an MACC report. This is wrong and unlawful. I hope the MACC relooks this provision and enforce it.

"A lot of times, these reports are made not based on truth but rather, based on political interest.

"If this is not stopped, then in the future, someone could lodge a report against us, whether it is true or false. When it comes out in the media, it could affect one's work or political career even if we are innocent," said Abdul Rahman.