

G25 moots separation of powers for PM, MACC, AGC in meet with reforms committee

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Tan Sri Mohd Sheriff speaks to reporters outside Ilham Gallery, Kuala Lumpur on May 31, 2018. — Picture by Miera Zulyana

KUALA LUMPUR, May 31 — A limit to the prime minister's authority and making the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) answerable to Parliament were among the key proposals submitted by civil group G25 to the Institutional Reform Committee (IRC) today.

The group of retired senior civil servants also suggested separating the role of the public prosecutor from that of the attorney-general to promote full independence in public institutions.

“Institutional reforms are very important to bring back confidence on the economy, apart from creating a true system of check and balance to avoid abuse of powers.

“MACC, for instance, should be independent of the prime minister. It should be answerable to a commission sitting above it which is then answerable to the Parliament,” Tan Sri Mohd Sheriff Mohd Kassim who led the six-member G25 team in its meeting with the IRC told reporters at Ilham Tower here.

The group was with the IRC, which answers to the Council of Eminent Persons, an informal advisory body to the government, for about 90 minutes and their discussions covered 10 reform issues.

Another member of the team Datuk Noor Farida Ariffin said limiting the prime minister’s powers would rid the culture of fear in the bureaucracy and help ensure independence to key institutions.

“You have to take away the power to hire and fire an Attorney-General, judges, the MACC officials, and even police from the prime minister.

“This is so that the police can conduct their probes, the prosecutors can prosecute and the judges can deliver their judgments without being influenced by anyone of high ranks independently.

“Once you create independent institutions, you can be assured that any wrongdoings by any politicians, or Cabinet ministers, or even the prime minister will not go unpunished,” she told reporters.

Mohd Sheriff said among G25’s recommendations involving the civil service included the need for racial balance, meritocracy and the need for a better process in appointing heads of important departments.

The group also expressed support towards Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad’s suggestion yesterday to review the role of Islamic

Religious Development Department (Jakim).

Noor Farida said the group also calls for the abolishment of the National Civics Bureau and the Islamic Strategic Research Institution Malaysia.

"We have done a major study on the administration of Islam, which will be published soon this. We support Dr M's suggestion and seek for the Council of Rulers to review Jakim's function.

"We also call for the Islamic Research Institute to be abolished. It concerns us when we heard they have been given a contract to brainwash students and civil servants to follow their very extremist thinkings.

"We also want the Civics Bureau to be axed for promoting racism and racial hatred. This kind of thinking is not acceptable in new Malaysia," she said.

G25 members said political financing should also be governed by having a transparent audit of the expenditures, and the disclosures of funds for both individual candidates and political parties.

"We noted that Datuk Paul Low was trying to introduce a reform committee but we feel like the recommendations made by us are more comprehensive because they include legislative changes," Mohd Sheriff said.

The other four members of G25 who attended the meeting today were Tan Sri Alwi Jantan, Tan Sri Asiah Abu Samah, Datuk Dr Narimah Awin and Datuk Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman.