

Civil service should have whistle-blowing policy, says former Chief Justice

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KUALA LUMPUR: The civil service should introduce a whistle-blowing policy in the work place, said former Chief Justice Tun Zaki Azmi.

He said that it is a public duty to report things that are not right.

"It is the duty of a civil servant or a public officer to report a wrong doing to certain parties," he told the media after a seminar on "Separation of Powers: Where is the neutrality line for public servants?" on Friday (Sept 14).

Zaki said this when asked if it was against the General Orders for civil servants to speak up.

On the contrary, he said that if the public servant did not report it, it meant the person did not carry out his or her duty.

Asked who civil servant whistle-blowers should report to, he said the government will have to decide on that.

"It can be the secretary-general, if it is a ministry, or the chief secretary to the Government, he said, adding a policy should be made on this.

Zaki said that according to a Public Service Department officer, there is currently no policy on whistle-blowing among civil servants.

"If we have the policy, the policy will determine how they make the report and ensure protection be given to the whistle blower," he said, adding that examples can be taken from private sector corporations that had implemented the policy.

He said that the policy must ensure that the whistle-blower is protected unless the information fed was fake. If so, action can be taken against the whistle-blower.

"In corporate governance, we have an email or phone number that the whistle-blower can contact.

"And the person who receives the information will not reveal the identity of the whistle-blower," he said.

Asked about gag orders that were given to civil servants to not speak to the media, he said that whistle-blowing does not mean complaining to the media, but to the right authorities.