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Maid urges review of decision not to prosecute ex-envoy

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - A Filipina maid, who accused the former Croatian ambassador here of raping her, today appealed to the Attorney-General to review his decision to close the case due to insufficient evidence.

Maria Fe T. Ocampo, 27, whose visa, is due to expire on Monday, was informed of Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah's decision by the Federal police headquarters on Dec 31.

The brief statement from Assistant Commissioner Musa Hassan, on behalf of the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Nor, reads:

"I refer to the rape case involving Maria Fe T. Ocampo which was reported to the police vide Ampang Report 14145/96 (the report was lodged on Sept 8 last year).

"A thorough investigation was carried out and has been completed. The investigation paper has been submitted to the head of prosecution, Attorney-General's office, for further scrutiny.

"After studying the investigation paper, the prosecution division of the Attorney-General's office has ruled that the case be closed and no further action be taken due to insufficient evidence to proceed against the suspect."

Ocampo's counsel, Karpal Singh, released the statement at a news conference at his office in Jalan Pudu Lama.

Ocampo had alleged that former ambassador Kresimir Znidaric, who hired her on April 7 last year, raped her four times between April 11 and Aug 23 last year at his residence in Ukay Heights, Ampang.

She also claimed that Znidaric outraged her modesty in his kitchen on Sept 5 last year at about 9.15am and the incident was witnessed by her mother, who was then working for the Croatian embassy.

Znidaric was recalled to Croatia and relieved of his post on Sept 23.

Karpal said he regretted the decision by Mohtar as Ocampo deserved and was entitled to proper justice through the country's legal system.

"I regret that despite the evidence received from Ocampo and her mother, and despite the fact that Znidaric had been sacked from his post, the case was closed," he said.

He added he would appeal to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the Home Minister, to intervene in the matter.

"This case can affect the image of the country if no action is taken to prosecute offenders of sex crimes," Karpal said.

He is expected to apply for an extension of Ocampo's visa until the disposal of the civil action she brought against Znidaric in the Shah Alam High Court.

No date has been fixed for the suit but Karpal has proposed to apply for an early hearing date.

Ocampo, who was accompanied by her mother Saturnina Talistic, 47, at the Press conference, said she wrote to Dr Mahathir in November last year.

"I asked the Prime Minister for justice to be done and be allowed to stay and work in Malaysia, but to date there is no reply."

Since the incident, Ocampo and her mother have been jobless and are staying with friends.

Ocampo also claimed she suffered physical and mental pain due to the incident.

Meanwhile, a Federal police spokesman said the investigation was completed about a month after the incident.

"We interviewed all the parties concerned before submitting our findings to the A-G," he said, adding the final decision was not to prosecute.

Mohtar was not available for comment.

A Croatia embassy official Petrak Zarko said the mission had no comment on the latest development in the case.

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