

31 MAR 1997

Court-Tenaganita

NO FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO PM ABOUT ALLEGATION OF ILL TREATMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 (Bernama) -- An official of a non-governmental organisation testified today that he did not send a follow-up letter to the Prime Minister to inform him that the allegation in his earlier letter about poor treatment of immigrants at the Langkap detention camp is untrue.

ERA Konsumer secretary S. Vejayan told a magistrate's court that he also did not hold any press conference to state that the allegation in his letter to the Prime Minister was baseless.

He added, however, that he would be asking the solicitors for his association to write to Dr Mahathir to say that the contents of his letter were untrue.

Vejayan told the court that he wrote to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Aug 2, 1995 to protest the placement of several detainees of the Langkap camp at the Hospital Bahagia.

Vejayan, 40, who is a medical assistant at Hospital Ipoh, was testifying at the trial of Tenaganita director Irene Fernandez.

Fernandez, 50, is accused of publishing false news in a memorandum titled "Abuse, Torture and Dehumanised Treatment of Migrant Workers at Detention Camps".

She is alleged to have committed the offence at the Tenaganita office in Lorong Bonus Enam, off Jalan Masjid India, here in August 1995.

She is charged under Section 8A(1) of the Printing Presses and Publication Act 1984 and faces a maximum sentence of three years' jail or a fine of RM20,000 or both upon conviction.

Earlier, in reply to defence counsel M.Puravalen, immigration officer Abdul Rahim Endut, 40, said his department received a report about the deaths in hospital of eight immigrants housed at the Semenyih camp. Among the cause for the deaths is heart-attack.

Abdul Rahim, however, said the department had never received any report of deaths that took place in the camp.

The hearing before Magistrate Juliana Mohamed continues tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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