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Suit against ex-Croatian envoy fixed for March 6

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The civil suit filed against a former Croatian ambassador who allegedly raped a Filipina maid will come up for hearing at the Shah Alam High Court on March 6.

Maria Fe T. Ocampo's counsel Karpal Singh said he obtained the date from the court last week.

He added that he would apply for judgment in default of defence and ask the judge to assess the quantum of damages owed to Ocampo on that day.

"This is because the ambassador, Kresimir Znidaric, has yet to file his defence. Ocampo had filed her suit on Oct 9 last year."

"If Znidaric, who has been recalled to Croatia and relieved of his post on Sept 23 last year, is innocent, he should come to court on March 6 and rebut the allegations against him."

"The Croatian Government must make sure Znidaric turns up in court. They should also waive the immunity accorded to Znidaric," he told a Press conference at his office today. Ocampo and her mother, Saturnina Talistic, 47, were present.

Karpal said although Znidaric had immunity, he had to go to court to declare that right.

He said if Znidaric did not turn up, judgment would be enforced on the Croatian Government as he (Znidaric) was acting as its agent.

Ocampo, 27, had alleged that 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 9.15am and the incident was witnessed by her mother, who was then working for the Croatian embassy.

Ocampo was informed by the Federal police headquarters on Dec 31 last year that Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah had decided to close the case due to insufficient evidence.

On Jan 10, she appealed to the Attorney-General to review his decision.

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

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

Karpal said even though the Government had decided to close the case, the civil suit would still proceed.

"The law provides for a civil remedy, especially in such cases where a high-ranking official is alleged to have committed a serious offence."

Karpal called on the authorities to extend the duration of Ocampo's visa so she could be here for the hearing. Her visa will expire on Jan 28.

"The Philippines Embassy has been very lackadaisical about this. It should extend to Ocampo whatever assistance she needs on this matter."

Ocampo said the (Philippines) embassy had told her she could not work in Malaysia any more.

"They told me this was because I had lodged a police report against my employer alleging that he had raped me."

Ocampo and her mother are now staying with an employee from the Philippines Embassy. They have both been unemployed since Sept 8 last year.

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