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Court-Anwar (Ristina)

DR RISTINA PREVENTED AZIZAN AND UMMI FROM SURRENDERING, COURT TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 7 (Bernama) -- Dr Ristina Majid, in whose house Ummi Hafilda Ali and Azizan Abu Bakar were arrested, had prevented them from going out of the house and surrendering to the police, the corruption trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in the High Court here was told today.

Azizan, 38, the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, said that he and Ummi Hafilda, the writer of a letter alleging Anwar's sexual misconduct, had wanted to go out of the house and surrender when the police cordoned Dr Ristina's house on Aug 17, last year but the dentist prevented them from doing so.

Azizan, the 12th prosecution witness, said that Dr Ristina had told them that the police had contacted her and informed her that he and Ummi Hafilda were wanted by the police.

"Dr Ristina also told me that the plain-clothed policemen wanted to detain me and Ummi. They could possibly be on Anwar's side, so Dr Ristina instructed me and Ummi not to go out," he said.

Azizan, who made a sworn statement alleging that the former deputy prime minister and former finance minister had sodomised him, was testifying under cross-examination by Christopher Fernando, one of Anwar's nine lawyers, at Anwar's trial on four charges of corrupt practice with using his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

Anwar, 51, is charged under Section 2(1) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance No 22 of 1970 which carries a maximum jail term of 14 years or fine of RM20,000 or both on conviction.

Asked why he and Ummi Hafilda did not allow the police to enter the house and arrest them, Azizan said that at that time they were Dr Ristina's guests and she was suspicious as to whether they were actually from the police.

Azizan said that he and Ummi Hafilda had stayed at Dr Ristina's house for two nights before they were arrested by the police.

He said that they had stayed there as they were afraid after being followed by several people whom they did not know and whom they believed were Anwar's men.

Dr Ristina, he said, did not tell them that she would protect him and Ummi Hafilda, who were in fear, when they were aware of the presence of a large police party.

Azizan said that he was not sure whether Dr Ristina had telephoned other people to tell them that Azizan and Ummi Hafilda were in the house while they were there.

He said that after they were arrested, the police took him and Ummi Hafilda to the police headquarters in Bukit Aman.

Azizan said that he knew Dr Ristina after having been introduced to her by Ummi Hafilda at Ummi Hafilda's family home in Klang Gates in August, last year.

He said that he did not discuss the alleged sodomy against him by Anwar with Dr Ristina and whatever discussions that took place were between Ummi Hafilda and Dr Ristina.

Azizan said that he only informed Dr Ristina of the sworn statement he had signed to be sent to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said that he did not know why Ummi Hafilda had wanted him to meet Dr Ristina but to his mind, Ummi Hafilda might have related to her about him

having allegedly been sodomised by Anwar.

At this juncture, Fernando reminded Azizan that if he was found to be lying while giving evidence, he could be charged with perjury.

Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail objected to this, saying that Fernando appeared to be intimidating and harassing the witness by repeating his question to him.

However, Fernando said that he would pose the question to Azizan one more time to give him another chance to answer it.

However, Azizan still gave the same answer.

Fernando: You mean to say, you went all the way to Klang Gates, purportedly to meet Dr Ristina and you did not discuss anything.

Azizan: Yes, I did not discuss anything with her.

Fernando: Azizan, I put it to you, you are a brazen liar, you are lying shamelessly.

Azizan: I am not lying My Lord. What I am saying is the truth.

Fernando: You stated just now that Ummi had asked you to go to Klang Gates but you did not discuss anything with her.

Abdul Gani objected to the question on the grounds that the defence had still not established that Ummi Hafilda had called Azizan to her house to have a discussion with Dr Ristina.

However, Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul, who is hearing the case, allowed the question.

Azizan replied to the question in the affirmative.

The hearing was then adjourned for lunch.

-- BERNAMA

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