

11 NOV 1998

Court-Anwar (Afternoon)

IGP INFORMED OF SOLID GRIP OPERATION IN AUGUST LAST YEAR, COURT TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 11 (Bernama) -- The corruption trial of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in the High Court here was today told that the Inspector-General of Police was informed of the letter on Anwar's alleged misconduct and the "Solid Grip" operation in August last year.

ACP Mazlan Mohamed Din, of the Special Branch, said that he briefed the IGP on the letter and the operation at a meeting at the IGP's office at about 9am on Aug 11, last year.

He said that he did so on the instructions of Special Branch Director Datuk Mohamed Said Awang.

Mazlan, the seventh prosecution witness, was testifying against Anwar, 51, who faces four charges of corrupt practice under the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance No 22, 1970 with using his power to instruct the police to obtain retractions from two people alleging his sexual misconduct.

Mazlan, who began testifying at 3.15pm, gave his evidence for about 35 minutes when the court adjourned to 9.15am tomorrow.

The court was earlier told that the police conducted an operation codenamed "Solid Grip" pertaining to allegations of Anwar's sexual misconduct, in 1992.

Mazlan said that on Aug 9, 1997, in his capacity as assistant commissioner of the Operations Division in the Special Branch, he received a call from Special Branch Deputy Director 11 Datuk Amir Junus asking him whether he had information on the letter and Anwar's sex scandal.

At an earlier hearing, the court was told that the letter dated Aug 5, last year written by Ummi Hafilda Ali, the sister of Anwar's former private secretary Mohamed Azmin Ali, was addressed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Among other things, the letter revealed Anwar's homosexual activities with his former driver, Azizan Abu Bakar, and Anwar's affair with Mohamed Azmin's wife.

Mazlan said that he informed Amir that he did not have any information at that time but told him that he would try to obtain them from his sources.

"After conducting checks, in the afternoon, at about 2pm, I further informed him (Amir) that I have such information," he said.

When Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Azahar Mohamed asked him where he got his information from, Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul interjected and at the same time, one of Anwar's nine lawyers, Gurbachan Singh, objected.

Justice Augustine Paul: I'm objecting before you.

This drew laughter from those in the packed courtroom.

When Mazlan answered Azahar's question that he had information on the special "Solid Grip" operation, Justice Augustine Paul said that he need not proceed as it had nothing to do with the present case. To this, Azahar said that the prosecution would not pursue the matter.

Mazlan then said that Amir instructed him to go to the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang the following day to brief Mohamed Said who was returning from abroad.

While there with Amir at about 10pm, he said, he briefed Mohamed Said on the letter and the operation but was asked to provide more details the following day.

Mazlan said that the following day, he briefed Mohamed Said again on the matter.

When Azahar asked Mazlan why the briefing on the Solid Grip operation was given in detail, another of Anwar's lawyers, Christopher Fernando, objected and the judge agreed with him.

Mazlan said that after the briefing, he was instructed by Mohamed Said to brief the Inspector-General of Police and he proceeded to his (IGP's) office at 9am with Amir and briefed the IGP on the letter containing the allegations of Anwar's misconduct and the related matters of the Solid Gold operation.

Fernando again objected and the judge allowed his objection.

Mazlan said that after the briefing, the IGP instructed him to proceed with the investigations into the letter and wanted to know the extent of its circulation.

"The IGP then handed over the letter on the matter of the misconduct of the deputy prime minister for our further action," he said.

He said that on Aug 12, 1997, at about 3pm, accompanied by Amir and Mohamed Said, he again met the IGP who wanted a report on the circulation of the letter.

"I reported to the IGP that ID14 (the letter) was not so widely circulated and informed him that the writer of the letter was in the process of trying to extend the copy to the Prime Minister," he said.

After the briefing, he said, the IGP directed him to continue to monitor the situation and to report back to him.

-- BERNAMA

NHD AHH RM