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Court-Anwar (Statement)

NOBODY TOLD ME TO MAKE SWORN STATEMENT, SAYS AZIZAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 3 (Bernama) -- Azizan Abu Bakar, the former driver of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's wife, said today no one told him to make a sworn statement alleging Anwar sodomised him.

Testifying against Anwar at the High Court, he said he made the statutory declaration on his own free will after discussing with Ummi Hafilda Ali.

Ummi, the sister of Anwar's former private secretary Mohd Azmin Ali, is the writer of a letter containing allegations of Anwar's sexual misconduct.

The letter was sent to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad along with Azizan's statement.

Anwar, who faces four charges of corrupt practice, is accused of using his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

The 51-year-old former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister is charged under Section 2(1) of Emergency Ordinance No 22 (Essential Powers) 1970 which carries a maximum jail sentence of 14 years or a fine of up to RM20,000, or both, upon conviction.

Azizan, the prosecution's 12th witness, was cross-examined by counsel Christopher Fernando.

Fernando: Who asked you to put up a document which you called statutory declaration?

Azizan: No one told me to make the statutory declaration. I did it on my own free will.

Fernando: Did you discuss with anyone before you put up the document?

Azizan: Before making the statutory declaration, I did discuss with Ummi about what had happened to me.

Fernando: Who approached whom? Did Ummi see you or did you see her?

Azizan: We met each other to discuss the matter.

Fernando: You mean both of you met and both of you have the same idea. Is that what you are trying to say?

Azizan: While I was working with Shamsidar...

Fernando: No need to explain. I just ask you, who approached whom?

Azizan: Ummi phoned me, to meet me.

Fernando: Where did you meet?

Azizan: We met at Ummi's office.

Fernando: Besides Ummi, were there anybody else present?

Azizan: No.

Fernando: What did Ummi said to you?

Azizan: At first Ummi wanted to know if her sister-in-law was having an affair with Anwar.

Fernando: With regard to the statutory declaration, how did you approach the subject or how did she do it?

Azizan: At first she did not know that I had been sodomised.

Fernando: Specifically, how did she approach the subject of the statutory declaration?

Azizan: I was the one who related to Ummi the incident that happened to me. Ummi did not show any reaction at first, she appeared calm.

Fernando: Was it she who told you to make the statutory declaration?

Azizan: It was me who told her to make the statutory declaration because Ummi is proficient in language.

Fernando: So, you are saying you ask Ummi to put up the statutory

declaration and she agreed?

Azizan: Yes, Your Honour.

Fernando: When did this happen? Your first meeting with Ummi?

Azizan: In mid-July 1997.

Fernando: How many meetings did you have with Ummi before the statutory declaration were made?

Azizan: As far as I can remember, two or three times.

Fernando: After it was made, how many times you met Ummi?

Azizan: Also two or three times, Your Honour, after the statutory declaration was made.

Fernando: How and who sent this statutory declaration to PM?

Azizan: I don't know because Ummi did not tell me who and how the statutory declaration was sent to the PM.

At this point, the court recessed for lunch.

Earlier, at the outset of today's hearing, Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul said he wanted the trial to begin at 9.15 sharp every morning.

Defence counsel Gurbachan Singh took the opportunity to complain to the judge that the defence faced problems in meeting Anwar.

Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail responded by saying that he had informed this to the Sungai Buloh prison authorities.

He added that he was told that Anwar would be present in court at 8 every morning and must be back at the prison by 6pm.

-- BERNAMA

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