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Rahim-Suit

RAHIM SUES TIME MAGAZINE AND UMNO YOUTH EXCO FOR DEFAMATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 1 (Bernama) -- Former Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik has filed a RM55 million libel suit against Time magazine over an article which appeared in its June 15 issue and a RM15 million defamation suit against Umno Youth exco Roslan Kassim over allegations made at the recent Umno general assembly.

Abdul Rahim told a news conference here that the two suits were filed on his behalf by Messers Puthuchear, Firoz and Asmet in the High Court here today.

He said that Time magazine was being sued over an article entitled "One Angry Man" headlined "How Malaysia Throttles Dissent" in which he has been mentioned.

In his suit against Roslan, who is also Negeri Sembilan Umno Youth head, he said that he was seeking RM5 million for slander and RM10 million for libel over his statement at the Umno general assembly allegedly linking him to the publication of the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM) allegedly defaming Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Abdul Rahim said that Time magazine had undermined the integrity of the Malaysian government and its administration of justice by its reference to his alleged sex scandal with an underage girl.

Rahim named the publisher of the Asian edition of Time magazine, John Marcom; Time Inc, Asia, publisher of the Asian edition of Time Magazine; the sub-editor of the Asian edition of Time magazine, Donald Morrison; and journalist David Leibhold as defendants.

According to his writ of summons which was distributed to reporters, the article, also produced over the Internet, is meant to refer to him as, among others, being guilty of rape or statutory rape and guilty of corruption but was not prosecuted on such offences by the Mahathir administration.

"I have instructed by lawyers to do whatever they could to have the hearing expedited in view of the public interest involved as the allegations have undermined the integrity of the government during this crucial period as well as tarnish my pride and reputation," he said.

Abdul Rahim, who was accompanied by several aides at the news conference, said that it was strange and cruel that in pursuing a commercial objective and a political agenda, he had been maimed and destroyed over something for which he had not been prosecuted and convicted by the court.

He said that he had been humiliated, labelled a criminal and termed an unfit Muslim, at the national and international level.

Abdul Rahim, who is also former Umno Youth chief, said that he and his family had suffered continuous humiliation.

"I feel that there is a real need for the people and the whole nation to know exactly, through this case, the actual reasons and concrete grounds for the Attorney-General not to prosecute me like how I was unfairly accused and tried by the mass media," he said, reading from a three-page prepared text.

On his defamation suit against Roslan, he said that his lawyers had also been instructed to get an early hearing date so that all allegations against him could be dispelled.

Abdul Rahim said that he had obtained a copy of the videotape recording

of Roslan making his speech at the Umno general assembly and in his writ of summons, he had pointed out the offending excerpts of the speech.

He said that many things had been implied from Roslan's speech including that he was responsible for the publication and distribution of the book, assisting in its publication and distribution and guilty of a plot to undermine Anwar's position in Umno and as Deputy Prime Minister.

Abdul Rahim said that he was also referred to as trying to destabilise Umno, as a disloyal Umno member, envious of power of others, guilty of trying to cause the downfall of Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and to cause Dr Mahathir and Anwar to be at loggerheads.

He said that the writs of summons had been served on the defendants soon after they were filed in court.

Asked whether Roslan had tried to contact him to offer his apology, he said that none of the defendants had offered their apologies although he had written to seek apologies from them, on July 13.

On whether Roslan, in making his speech at the Umno general assembly, had immunity from the law, he said that only Members of Parliament had such immunity during Parliament sittings and therefore those responsible should suffer the consequences of their actions.

"I will also take similar action against the DAP for bringing up my name here, there and everywhere," he said without elaborating.

Abdul Rahim said that he had also filed an application for an injunction seeking to restrain the defendants from further publishing, writing or distributing anything regarding him.

-- BERNAMA

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