

22 DEC 1998

Court-Anwar (Letter)

LETTER ON ALLEGATIONS OF ANWAR'S SEXUAL MISCONDUCT GIVEN TO DAIM

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 22 (Bernama) -- Ummi Hafilda Ali, the writer of the letter containing allegations of sexual misconduct against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said today that she gave the letter to Special Functions Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin and a copy to the Prime Minister's political secretary, Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin.

She told Anwar's corruption trial in the High Court here that the letter was to be handed over to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Ummi Hafilda said that she also gave a copy of the letter to actress Ziela Jalil to be handed over to Ziela's husband, Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megar Ayob, the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister.

"Besides that, I did not send the letter to anyone else," she said when testifying under cross-examination at the trial of the former deputy prime minister and former finance minister.

Anwar, 51, faces four charges of corrupt practice with using his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

He 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.

Ummi Hafilda said that she gave the letter and copies of the letters to them as she did not direct access to the prime minister.

"The letter is extremely confidential. I need to seek the assistance of people close to the prime minister," said Ummi Hafilda, who claimed to be an Umno member and is a former head of the Klang Gate Baru Wanita Umno branch.

Asked by defence counsel Christopher Fernando why she had gone to see lawyer Karpal Singh who is from the opposition and not a lawyer who is from Umno or the Barisan Nasional, Ummi Hafilda said that she had only gone to seek legal advice.

She denied his suggestion that her purpose was to politicise the issue.

Ummi Hafilda admitted that she had participated in an information session with former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba and former Melaka Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik, who is also former Umno Youth chief, in Pulau Pinang at the invitation of Pulau Pinang Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Sharif Omar.

She however said that she merely introduced herself there.

Ummi Hafilda also admitted to making a statutory declaration dated last June 23, prepared by a lawyer and signed by her, under pressure.

It was to prove that she was not involved in any way with the letter contained in the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM).

Asked whether he had lodged a police report against Anwar, she said that she did not do so because she was afraid she might be arrested and tortured by the police.

"I was afraid that once again I may be arrested and forced to do something against my will. I have experienced a phobia after I was arrested by the police on Aug 17, last year," she said.

She was arrested on Aug 17, last year and interrogated non-stop from midnight until 7am the following day to ensure that she would write a letter of retraction denying her allegations against Anwar.

In her letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (In The Matter Of The Misconduct Of The Deputy Prime Minister), Ummi Hafilda, the sister of Anwar's former private secretary, Mohamed Azmin Ali, among others, claims that Mohamed Azmin's wife, Shamsidar Taharin, had an affair with Anwar.

A sworn statement by Azizan Abu Bakar, the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, and who later worked for Shamsidar, alleging that Anwar had sodomised him, was attached to the letter when it was sent to the prime minister.

Ummi Hafilda also said that she had been called to be interviewed 10 times at the Bukit Aman police headquarters after she was released on police bail on Aug 18, last year.

Asked whether he had met one Mohamed Taib Solomon, she said that she had met him together with one Mr Tan at the office of her dentist friend, Dr Ristina Majid, in whose house she was arrested with Azizan.

"I met the two of them who came with Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin but did not know their roles. I was merely told by Dr Ristina that they were from the Special Branch," she said.

The court was told that Mohamed Taib, a former police officer who was sacked, had posed as a Special Branch officer.

Asked the reason for her meeting Aziz, Ummi Hafilda said it was to seek his assistance to hand over the letter to the prime minister.

The hearing continues at 9am tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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