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Court-Anwar (Karpal)

UMMI AND I APPROACHED KARPAL FOR ADVICE, SAYS AZIZAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 3 (Bernama) -- Ummi Hafilda Ali and Azizan Abu Bakar consulted lawyer Karpal Singh in connection with their allegations of sexual misconduct against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the High Court heard today.

Azizan, the former driver of Anwar's wife, said the two of them met Karpal at his office in Lorong Pudu here several days before they were arrested at the house of Dr Ristina Majid.

Ummi is the sister of Anwar's former private secretary Mohd Azmin Ali, and Dr Ristina is a close friend of hers.

Azizan, 38, testifying in Anwar's corruption trial, said he and Ummi sought legal advice from Karpal "because we were constantly followed by people whom we don't know".

He said they told Karpal about the allegations contained in a letter written by Ummi titled "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter of the Deputy Prime Minister's Misconduct) and in a sworn statement made by him.

Karpal, said Azizan, looked at the letter and statement and then said that since they were addressed to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, "let the PM resolve this problem because the PM knows how to resolve it".

Azizan, the 12th prosecution witness in the case that entered its 19th day today, was questioned by senior Deputy Public Prosecutor Datuk Abdul Gani Patail.

Anwar, 51, the former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, faces four counts of using his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

He 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 said that apart from seeking legal advice from Karpal, he was not expecting anything from the lawyer.

"All we wanted was to get proper defence should legal action be taken against us," he said.

Earlier, Azizan said he and Ummi were accompanied by Dr Ristina when they went to Karpal's office because they were scared after being followed by unknown people "possibly in connection with our letters" (Ummi's letter and Azizan's statement).

At this juncture, defence counsel Gurbachan Singh objected but was overruled by Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul.

Gani: Azizan, why did you say that there is a possibility that people were following you in connection with the letters?

Azizan: From what we were made to understand, the letters we wrote had reached the hands of the PM and I don't know if the letters had been circulated.

Gani: Apart from being followed by unknown people, did anything else happen after these letters were prepared?

Azizan: Before that, I had also received a phone call from Anwar asking how I could be involved in the sworn statement and the letter "Perihal Salah Laku TPM". The accused was very angry with me. Every day and night, my house in Rawang was always watched by unknown people.

Gurbachan made a fresh objection at this point but was again overruled.

Gani: Why did you meet lawyer Karpal Singh?

Azizan: As we all know, lawyer Karpal Singh is the best lawyer in this city, therefore we went to his office to obtain legal advice.

The answer was greeted with smiles and laughter by those present in the court including the judge.

To another question, Azizan said that while at Karpal's office, he saw Ummi phone her friend asking for the letter and sworn statement to be faxed there.

Gani: On the day you went to Karpal Singh's office to meet the lawyer, did you know that he was a Member of Parliament?

Azizan: I knew that lawyer Karpal Singh was a Member of Parliament.

Gani: Do you know which party YB Karpal Singh is from?

Azizan: YB Karpal Singh is from the DAP.

-- BERNAMA

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