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Court-Anwar (Murder)

ANWAR TELLS COURT OF GROUP WILLING TO MURDER HIM

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told the High Court here today that he had learnt that there was a group of people which was willing to do anything against him, including murder.

Anwar said he was told of this by Norazman Abdullah alias Baginda, an aide to Datuk Sng Chee Hwa, a Member of Parliament from Sarawak, at the end of June or early July 1998.

"I received information from Baginda, who urged me to be careful because this group was prepared to resort to anything...slander, fabrication and it even used the word murder," he said.

Anwar, a former deputy prime minister, said this in his defence against a charge of sodomising his wife's former driver Azizan Abu Bakar.

Anwar, 52, and his adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 38, are being jointly tried on charges of sodomising Azizan, 39, in Sukma's apartment in Tivoli Villa, Bangsar, here, one night at 7.45, between January and March 1993.

Sukma, a businessman, was also charged with abetting Anwar to sodomise Azizan at the same place and time.

Asked by his lead counsel Christopher Fernando when the conversation on the conspiracy was raised, Anwar said Baginda told him that he (Baginda), Sng and Ummi Hafilda Ali had just returned from a holiday in London.

(Ummi Hafilda, a younger sister of Anwar's former private secretary Azmin, is the writer of the letter "The Matter of the Deputy Prime Minister's Misconduct" which was sent to the Prime Minister together with a sworn statement by Azizan alleging he was sodomised by Anwar.)

Anwar said Baginda, who is from Sarawak, also told him that information gathered from Ummi Hafilda showed that she had connections with Tun Daim Zainuddin (now the First Finance Minister).

"She (Ummi Hafilda) had contacted the author of the book "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM", that is Khalid Jafri, his assistant Khairuddin Hassan, and also several other Umno politicians, especially Tengku Adnan Mansor, a proxy for Tan Sri Vincent Tan, and who is now executive secretary of Umno Malaysia," he said.

When testifying Anwar held his head as if he was in pain, prompting Justice Datuk Arifin Jaka to ask whether he could continue with his testimony.

When Anwar said he would try to answer a couple more questions, Arifin said he should inform the court if he could not continue.

In continuing his evidence, Anwar said almost the whole of his conversation with Baginda "centred on the plot to topple me, and in fact the term (istilah) murder was used (by the group)."

At this juncture, the public following the trial laughed when Arifin asked Anwar for clarification on the word "istilah" which he had heard like "Ziela".

In jest, Arifin said he thought of the name because it was frequently mentioned.

(Ziela Jalil is Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob's wife, who, Anwar claimed, is a friend of Ummi Hafilda.)

After answering a question from Fernando, Anwar told Arifin that he could not continue with his testimony because of a headache but was willing to do so if asked to.

However, Arifin said the court would not force him.

Earlier, before he spoke about Baginda, Anwar said the first time he discussed with Azmin concerning Ummi Hafilda was in 1997 after Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad handed him the letter said to have been sent by Ummi Hafilda to the Prime Minister through Megat Junid.

He said that during the discussion Azmin explained that he had problems with Ummi Hafilda because she was not happy with him for not helping her in business.

Anwar said he also talked about Ummi Hafilda with Azmin in 1998 and his former private secretary told him that his sister had gone too far because she received payments.

Azmin also said Ummi Hafilda told him that Megat Junid drafted the letters she sent to the Prime Minister, including Azizan's sworn statement, he said.

Anwar said Azmin also told him that Ummi Hafilda had met Daim, Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik (former Melaka chief minister), Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin (Dr Mahathir's political secretary) and Ziela as part of the conspiracy.

Hearing continues tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

NHD YBY