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Inspector-General of Police resigns (HL)

Ashraf Abdullah; R.V. Veera

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor announced his resignation today, assuming responsibility for the injuries suffered by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while in police custody.

His announcement came two days after the disclosure by Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah that the police were responsible for some of the injuries on the former Deputy Prime Minister while he was in their legal custody.

In a three-paragraph statement faxed to the Press, Rahim said:

"I refer to the Press statement by the honourable Attorney-General on Jan 5, 1999 regarding the police investigation on the injuries of YB Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"In para 9 of the statement, the honourable Attorney-General is of the opinion that the Royal Malaysia Police is fully responsible for the injuries to the complainant while he was in legal custody of the police.

"I, as Inspector-General of the Royal Malaysia Police, assume full responsibility in respect of the matters referred thereto.

"I have therefore taken a decision to terminate my service as the Inspector-General of Police with effect from tomorrow, Jan 8, 1999."

The resignation of Rahim, who became the third Malaysian Inspector-General on Jan 16, 1994 when he succeeded Tun Hanif Omar, comes five months before his first yearly contract ends.

Rahim's service was extended on contract basis after his retirement in June last year.

His announcement came amidst mounting criticism of the police force over the A-G's revelation that some of the injuries on Anwar were caused by the police.

Various quarters, including political parties and non-governmental organisations, had called for a deeper investigation and action against the member or members of the police force who had assaulted Anwar.

Paragraph 9 of Mohtar's statement on Tuesday reads:

"As I have stated earlier, police investigation in this case has not been completed.

"From the evidence obtained so far, a prima facie case has not yet been disclosed to enable the institution of prosecution under section 323 of the Penal Code against any person for causing hurt to the complainant or for abetting the commission of such offence.

"The report of the panel of doctors shows that there were several injuries suffered by the complainant before his arrest by the police.

"Based on the medical reports and investigation file of the Special Investigation Team as a whole, I am satisfied that several injuries alleged by the complainant are not true, while there are injuries on certain parts of his body which are proved to have been caused by police officers whilst he was in police custody.

"I am also of the opinion that the Royal Malaysia Police is fully responsible for the injuries to the complainant whilst he was in the legal custody of the police.

"Nevertheless, the investigation which has been carried out so far has not identified the person or persons responsible for such injuries."

Mohtar said he had on Dec 30 ordered the Special Investigation Team headed by Assistant Commissioner Mat Zain Ibrahim to interview Rahim and several senior officers whose statements had not been recorded.

Anwar lodged a police report on Sept 27 last year claiming that he was assaulted by the police.

He was arrested on Sept 20 for disrupting public order and was later detained under the Internal Security Act.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government would consider suggestions by the various quarters for the setting up of an independent inquiry to investigate injuries sustained by Anwar.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said the police investigation was not conclusive probably because a lower ranking officer, who carried out the investigation, was not in a position to record statements from higher-ranking officers.

Rahim, who joined the police as a cadet Assistant Superintendent in September 1969, played a key role when he was with the Special Branch in negotiations with the then Communist Party of Malaya, which led to its members laying down their weapons in late 1989.

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