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Marina says she cannot get fair hearing

Sarban Singh

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Keadilan vice-president Marina Yusof said today she would not challenge the statutory declaration made by former Bank Negara assistant governor Datuk Abdul Murad Khalid, saying that if she did so, she would not get a fair hearing in court.

She called a Press conference today to answer allegations made by Murad on Thursday but skirted the issue of suing him.

Marina, a former Sessions Court president, was also Umno Wanita deputy chief who left the party to join Semangat 46 in 1989. She returned to Umno in 1996, and joined Keadilan this year.

She said she did not believe the statutory declaration (SD) was made by Murad willingly.

She also said she was not shocked at Murad's statement because she knew "he had been hounded, threatened and blackmailed to the extent that he had to resign from Bank Negara and then from RHB Bank.

"I will not take legal action now because we do not want to be fighting among ourselves. That is what they (the Government) want.

"But I will surely take action one day when this Government is no longer in power ... moreover the courts are now controlled by (Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad)," she said, adding that the media and journalists could also be sued for printing lies.

Marina said she did not believe Murad drafted the SD himself as it was not in character and the words used were similar to previous forced confessions produced as evidence against former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Saying she had been in the legal line for over 30 years, she knew that Murad was not capable of making such allegations.

"He is a very humble man and well liked by his staff. He can never pen such ridiculous allegations," she said.

Murad in his SD had, among other things, claimed that Anwar had instructed him to help settle Marina's debt with local banks amounting to more than RM20 million.

He said he presented Marina's application to the Bumiputera Entrepreneur Rehabilitation Fund (TPU) for assistance to develop her land along Jalan Tun Razak, where the Marina Complex was constructed.

Explaining to reporters today, Marina said her Marina project began in 1983 and she sought Dr Mahathir's blessings. She said she knew that anyone who planned to have a major project must get the go-ahead from the Prime Minister.

By the time she had obtained all approvals for the project, it was already 1987, she said.

However, she then wrote a letter to Dr Mahathir alleging that Umno treasurer Tun Daim Zainuddin was involved in the theft of the party's funds.

She said Daim was furious when he knew of the letter.

Marina alleged that Daim then directed all banks to recall loans granted to her and her companies, and attempted to make her a bankrupt.

Due to the actions by the banks, she was called to Bank Negara several times and in the process, met Murad who then advised her to apply for the TPU loan.

Marina said she was reluctant to do so as she felt the odds were against her as she was considered to have gone against Dr Mahathir and Daim.

However, in 1989 her application was approved by the TPU.

"I would like to stress that at no time was the TPU loan used for settlement of my bank loans."

Marina said the RM20 million was in settlement of the original loans with the banks for redemption of the document of title, which was used as security for the existing loans for the project. This she said was a normal commercial transaction which had nothing to do with Anwar.

"Anwar's role, if at all there was one, was simply that he did not block approval of my loan from the TPU. I only spoke to him over the telephone and requested him not to block my loan as the project was viable," she said, adding that Anwar then told her that he had received the green light from Dr Mahathir.

Marina also questioned the sudden appearance of the SD.

In another Press statement, Anwar's former private secretary Datuk Nasaruddin Abdul Jalil said he has instructed his lawyers to take legal action against Murad.

In his SD, Murad had claimed that Nasaruddin received RM10 million from one of Anwar's master account.

Nasaruddin said the allegation was baseless.

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