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Marina's ramblings over loan episode serves more to confuse

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KEADILAN vice-president Marina Yusof certainly took her time to come out with her side of the story following the allegations by former Bank Negara assistant governor Datuk Abdul Murad Khalid.

It took her four days to reply to the allegations made last Thursday.

Murad had claimed that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had instructed him to help settle Marina's debt of more than RM20 million.

He said he had presented Marina's application to the Tabung Pemulihan Usahawan for assistance to develop her land along Jalan Tun Razak where now stands the eponymous Marinara Complex which opens next April.

Yesterday, Marina lashed back with a reply typed over three pages.

If anyone thought that Marina would challenge the declaration by suing Murad in court, they would have been surprised.

Marina, a former Sessions Court president, said she would not defend her position, claiming that she would not get a fair hearing.

In her statement, she claimed that her financial problems began when Tun Daim Zainuddin made trouble for her after she complained about him to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

She sought Bank Negara's help and Murad advised her to apply for a TPU loan. She did and it was approved. She said this loan had nothing to do with the RM20 million settlement with the bank. That came from another bank.

And most importantly, she claimed that Anwar had nothing to do with the entire exercise and his only role, if at all, was that he did not block her loan application.

But despite her angry outburst, the Press conference and three-page statement was about as far as Marina says she is willing to go to clear her name. She doesn't want to sue because she doesn't trust the judiciary which she claims is controlled by Dr Mahathir.

Her other compatriots, Anwar included, however, didn't have the same qualms. Anwar had sued Dr Mahathir for defamation while her party's deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar had very quickly announced plans to sue Murad.

Perhaps she had a different focus.

She began her explanation with a vilification of Dr Mahathir. "My project, Marinara, started in 1983. Before I even started it, I had asked Dr Mahathir for his blessing as I knew even then that anyone who plans any major project `without the blessing' of Dr Mahathir would have problems.

"It was a known fact that Umno, particularly Dr Mahathir, had a policy of blocking all facilities and loans to people they regarded as political enemies. There were many occasions when I heard Dr Mahathir give instructions to remove directorships, positions, loans and facilities from persons he regarded as enemies."

Then, she went on to Daim's supposed theft of Umno funds. She claimed to have complained about this to Dr Mahathir, though peculiarly enough she also claimed that she was convinced of Dr Mahathir's "wrongdoings" at the same time.

Marina spoke of Daim's moves to bankrupt her through his "lapdog" lawyer and to destroy her using the "Umno-controlled" media.

She also included comments about Tunku Abdul Rahman's campaign against Dr Mahathir, the country heading for destruction and the "persecution" of Anwar.

Details of her claim to innocence in the Marinara dealings were woven into these ramblings which merely served to confuse.

Being a senior lawyer (she was in fact the second Malay woman lawyer in the country), Marina could well have shorn emotion and needless vilification from her statement, if she wanted to.

Far from protesting her innocence, she was declaring her political stand, which seems quite fluid by her own admission.

Somewhere in the statement where she was recounting how she had requested Anwar not to block her TPU loan, she said she had also asked him whether she should rejoin Umno.

"I asked him if it was necessary for me to rejoin Umno at that stage" was how she put it, demonstrating a rather blow-with-the-wind stand. At that time, she was with the now-defunct Semangat 46.

In a nutshell, she started out as Umno Wanita deputy chief but left in 1989 to join Semangat 46. She returned to Umno in 1996 and left again to join Keadilan this year.

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