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Ezam under probe for smear campaign

ALOR STAR, Sat. - Police have begun investigating Parti Keadilan Nasional Youth chief Ezam Mohd Noor over his recent confession that he had smeared the name of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad while abroad.

This follows reports lodged at the Dang Wangi police headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and at the Kota Star police headquarters yesterday.

Both reports called for police to initiate investigations into Ezam's confession which was said to be seditious in nature.

State Criminal Investigation Department chief Assistant Commissioner Abdul Jalal Mohd Yunus said police would be calling witnesses to facilitate investigations under the Sedition Act.

In a related development, Ezam, having come under media spotlight and drawing criticisms from various quarters for allegedly betraying the country, today denied links with any US-based strategic consultancy firm.

"Neither I nor the party has ever engaged any US-based lobby organisation in our campaign to free Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim," he told a Press conference at Keadilan's headquarters Phileo Damasara Business Centre in Petaling Jaya.

"What I have done overseas is the same as what I have done in the country, which is to criticise the policies and actions of Dr Mahathir and Barisan Nasional."

On Thursday, Bernama quoted a Singapore Straits Times report stating that Anwar's supporters had engaged a Washington-based lobby firm to highlight his cause and lobby for economic pressure on Malaysia.

Ezam acknowledged that "friends of Datuk Seri Anwar" had engaged the services of Janus Merritt Strategy, a strategy consultancy firm based in Washington.

However, he added the Opposition party would decide the role JSM could play and decide whether they should receive the party's endorsement.

On his recent visit to the US, Mohd Ezam said he was invited to participate in a forum on the presidential election at Hawaii's East West Centre.

While Ezam told local media he had not met with any lobby organisation while in the US, he was also quoted by Singapore's Straits Times on Wednesday as to have said he was introduced to JMS staff while there.

Asked whether he had been misquoted or whether the Straits Times article was a fabrication, Ezam replied in the negative.

On Wednesday, Utusan Malaysia reported that he had confessed his involvement in the smear campaign against Dr Mahathir in the United States and Europe.

He was also quoted as saying that Keadilan President Datin Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, vice-president Tian Chua and information chief Ruslan Kassim were responsible for influencing Malaysian students abroad.

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