

Between the 1948 massacre and Altantuya's murder

MalaysiaKini.com

April 15, 2012

By Mat Zain Ibrahim

COMMENT Last Thursday, about 30 protesters greeted British Premier David Cameron as he was about to enter the Nottingham University in Semenyih, demanding a British inquiry into the massacre which had happened in Batang Kali, Ulu Yam, Selangor in 1948, some 64 years ago.

NONE Cameron, born on Oct 9, 1966, must have been embarrassed by that protest. Still, being the British premier he bears the burden of bringing closure to the incident that took place 18 years before he was even born. Not forgetting the embarrassment that must have been felt by some British citizens who have made Malaysia their second home and many more who are here working or on short trips.

Rest assured that the Batang Kali massacre will resurface from time to time either here or in the UK, by the remaining survivors or their next of kin, until a such time the incident is brought to its total closure.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak must take cognisance of the Batang Kali protest as a notice that the Altantuya Shariibuu murder issues will surface and resurface again, either here or in Mongolia or France or in any part of the world where our Malaysian flag is recognised, until the whole truth is known, just like the Batang Kali massacre.

We should not allow our children and grandchildren including those yet to be born, to be held answerable for the lusts, greed and blunders of a few, irrespective of who they may be or the power they wielded. I pray that many will share the same view.

As a former lead investigator of the Batang Kali massacre case when it was reopened in 1993, I must admit the uphill task faced by the investigation team to gather evidence to the case, as records and literatures of the incident was scarce then. That reinvestigation exercise was almost two decades ago and things were different then. Internet usage in Malaysia started to pick up only after 1995.

It's a whole new ball game now. The detailed account and the who's who in the Altantuya murder case, are just a click away. The 'lack of evidence' stance commonly adopted by Putrajaya is no longer relevant.

Ball is in the PM's court

The ball is in the PM's court now. He has to make a decision not only as the prime minister of Malaysia but as a person who has a first-hand knowledge of the background surrounding Altantuya's death.

azlan Just because his close confidante Razak Baginda was acquitted and discharged without his defence being called and the deliberate refusal of attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail to file an appeal, does not mean Razak Baginda is innocent.

The amount of shadow play and power abuse by the AG in handling the prosecution case is too obvious to be brushed aside and undoubtedly justify a retrial.

Razak Baginda and private investigator P Balasubramaniam can be brought back for the retrial, not only for their affidavits and statutory declarations (SDs) to be tested, but they could shed some light on whether Altantuya Shariibuu was a Muslim adopting the name Amina Abdullah.

altantuya trial 160707 azilah It was clearly foul play when the AG himself facilitated advantages to favour Razak Baginda, while purposely depriving the other two accused, Chief Inspector Azilah Hadri (right) and Corporal Sirul Azhar Umar, of their rights to a fair trial.

There was certainly a miscarriage of justice. If the AG cannot differentiate between 'discretionary powers' and 'duty-bound', then he should not be sitting in that chair a minute longer.

If eventually Razak Baginda has to face the gallows with the rest of the perpetrators, then so be it.

Should the matter end with Gani being the one to be thrown into prison for his crimes instead, then so be it as well.

If Gani claims that the evidence against him in the Altantuya murder trial is flimsy and not worthy of mention, then evidence in other cases are in abundance and readied.

Not just Hobson's choice

At least the circumstances appear to be kind to the PM, leaving him with some choices instead of just the Hobson's choice.

The PM could now choose to go for a retrial. At least it can cushion the impact of the controversial Scorpene submarine deal which is expected to hit Malaysian shores once the trial commences in France.

The PM cannot go on protecting Razak Baginda, though he is a close confidante, and leaving the rest of the 28 million citizens of Malaysia to swallow the embarrassment and humiliation that would certainly be exposed to the world. The PM is not being fair to the citizens if he maintains his position on Razak Baginda.

He should take into consideration the feelings of every Malaysians living here and those living in France, UK and elsewhere, when the French court declares to the world that the Malaysian PM stands accused in a multi million Euro corruption case, which could be linked to the gruesome murder of a Mongolian woman. We cannot afford to allow the world to think Malaysians are barbarians.

Human rights group Suaram cannot be blamed for taking the case to the French court. They had no one to turn to, back home. The case could have been dealt with locally by our own competent authority, had it not been for the cover-ups and manipulations perpetuated by the AG during the prosecution stage.

The other alternative the PM has is to get a tribunal to be established to adjudicate the misconduct of Gani, the attorney-general. The PM is already in possession of the relevant materials to justify his representation to the newly installed Yang di-Pertuan Agong. I suppose the demand for a tribunal is overwhelming.

I'm afraid there is no other choice. In a coin flip, you either choose heads or tails. One cannot expect to win both.

At this stage, maintaining a deafening silence is certainly not an option. The PM can avoid meeting any person he does not want to see, but he cannot run away from reality and the truth.

The choices may sound cruel to the PM, but not as cruel as blasting to pieces a defenceless woman.

Although 24 unarmed villagers' lives were lost in the Batang Kali massacre, it never came close to the cruelty imposed not only on Altantuya a.k.a. Amina Abdullah, but the injustices done to the Malaysian citizens at large.

