

## **Najib brushes aside questions on Scorpene subs**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**April 22, 2012**

**By Susan Loone**

Prime Minister Najib Razak has snubbed questions about human rights NGO Suaram's case in France involving alleged kickbacks to top Malaysian officials over the purchase of two Scorpene class submarines.

najib in penang usm dialogue 220412Najib was asked to comment about the matter and whether he would testify in the French court.

Suaram has submitted his name as a witness as he was the defence minister involved in the procurement of the submarine

"I don't need to comment... I don't want to comment, thank you," he said crisply at a press conference at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang, where he met two groups of NGOs - one Indian and one Chinese.

The journalist was about to ask Najib the reasons why he was dodging queries about the case, but the press conference which lasted less than 10 minutes, ended abruptly and the premier left.

The French court held its first hearing last week before judge Roger Le Loire in a three-hour session where a three-member Suaram team presented their statement and list of witnesses.

kua kia soongLe Loire accepted the team's presentation submitted by Suaram director Kua Kia Soong (left), secretariat member Cynthia Gabriel and lawyer Fadiyah Nadwa Fikri at the Paris tribunal Grande Instance.

Gabriel said that the hearing was to confirm Suaram's complaint and reaffirmed the need for a judicial investigation into the RM7.3 billion deal in 2002.

The deal had allegedly led to the gruesome of Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu by military explosives in a jungle clearing in Shah Alam between October 19-20, 2006.

Two of Najib's former bodyguards and political analyst - a close ally of the premier - Abdul Razak Baginda were charged for her gruesome murder but the latter was acquitted without his defense being called.

Razak's name has cropped up again in the French inquiry as the investigative judges are looking into two companies - both linked to him - to which French giant shipyard builder DCNS had allegedly funnelled illegal commissions.

Najib has denied any involvement with the case and has gone as far as to swear on the Quran at a mosque that he does not know Altantuya.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi made an about turn last week and snubbed the French inquiry although he had earlier said he was willing to testify.

Refusing to attend the inquiry on the submarines purchase, Zahid added that the ministry will not be sending any representatives, passing the buck to the Malaysian ambassador to see to the matter.



