

Paris court can issue arrest warrant if subpoena rejected

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By Aidila Razak

An international arrest warrant can be issued by a French judge if a witness refuses to assist in an inquiry following the issuance of a subpoena.

NONEAccording to French lawyer Joseph Breham (right), who is acting on behalf of Malaysian NGO Suaram on the civil complaint on the multi-million ringgit arms kickbacks, a "red alert" can be sent to Interpol as a last resort.

"If the witness refuses to abide by the subpoena, the court can issue a notice mandat d'amener, compelling the witness to appear before it. If the witness (still) fails to oblige, a warrant of arrest may be issued.

"The warrant of arrest is applicable within the French territory, and may be internationalised, if the judge deems it necessary."

Last month, Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said neither he nor anyone from his ministry would assist in the French inquiry.

Zahid was named in the list of seven witnesses proposed by Suaram, which was accepted by French investigating judge Roger Le Loire.

However, this does not mean that all seven witnesses, including Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his associate Abdul Razak Baginda will be subpoenaed by the inquiry.

Criminal charges soon

The judge is currently in the process of issuing subpoenas.

NONE"The judge did indicate that Abdul Razak Baginda is a key person (in the case)," Suaram director Cynthia Gabriel (left) told a press conference today.

Reading out Breham's explanation to media, Suaram activist and lawyer Fadhiah Nadwa Fikri added Breham was also informed that criminal charges will be brought upon those involved in the kickbacks.

Fadhiah said that French prosecutors told Suaram's lawyers that it is about to conclude criminal investigations, separate to Suaram's complaint, on the same matter.

"The civil case has given birth to a criminal investigation. The prosecutors have told our lawyers that criminal charges will be brought soon," she said, although it is unclear who will be charged and when.

The scandal involving DCN is also linked to prominent French politicians.

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