

Dr M's ex-aide denies owning 'Project IC' safe house

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SABAH RCI Abdul Aziz Shamsudin, former political secretary to former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has denied that he was the owner of a house used to process blue identity cards for illegal immigrants.

NONETestifying before the royal commission of inquiry on immigrants in Sabah this afternoon, Abdul Aziz (right) said the claim was a fabrication.

"I swear in the name of Allah I have never owned a house with the address No 18, Jalan Kampung Pandan and I regret this baseless accusation," he testified at the Kota Kinabalu Court Complex.

Abdul Aziz, who is the 202nd witness, was asked to respond to allegations by former Sabah National Registration Department (NRD) director Abdul Rauf Sani and former Tamparuli NRD chief Yakup Damsa, who were the 14th and 15th RCI witnesses respectively.

They had claimed that Abdul Aziz had allowed his house to be used by them to sign blue identity cards for illegal immigrants under 'Project IC'.

They also alleged that this was done in the presence of one Colonel Mohd Noor.

When queried by conducting officer Azmi Arifin whether he had any knowledge of the house, Abdul Aziz said it was owned by the Royal Selangor Club.

"Yes, I did go to the house, it is a a place where former ITM (Institut Teknologi Mara) students who have succeeded in business gather to discuss the future of their race.

"It had nothing to do with making blue identity cards, all that did not happen," he said.

He added that he also had a house at number 10 along the road and stays there.

'Ex-Sabah NRD head met Mahathir'

Asked if he knew the colonel who had allegedly accompanied the NRD officers in the house, Abdul Aziz said the military man was with the intelligence division in the

Defence Ministry but had since passed away.

"I knew him because I was a political secretary and I was close to intelligence sources, including the Special Branch and military intelligence," he said.

However, Abdul Aziz insisted that he had no knowledge whatsoever about Project IC.

He also denied knowing Yakup but conceded that he knew Abdul Rauf and had set up a meeting for him with Mahathir.

"I met him in Sabah and occasionally we did meet when in Kuala Lumpur. He had also asked for a meeting with the then-prime minister.

"Because he was the head of Sabah NRD, I did not hesitate and helped set up a meeting between him and Mahathir," he said.

Abdul Aziz added that when the two met, he had left the room and had no knowledge of what was discussed.

"Nor did I ask what they had discussed because that would be being a busybody," he said.

To allegations that he had at one point visited the Sabah NRD officers at No 18 and told them to "make it like their own home", he also denied this.

"If it was my house I would have moved in myself, it was better because it's a bungalow, I only live in a terrace house," he said.

As Mahathir's political secretary from 1981 to 2000, Abdul Aziz said his duty was to foster good relations with all Umno divisions to ensure their support.

"My duty was also to foster good relations with all political parties in BN and even in the opposition to collect information and pass them to the prime minister," he said.

Abdul Aziz insisted that he had never interfered in the government's administration.

"I strongly deny that I was ever involved in Project IC... I ask that I no longer be accused of such things because I was never involved," he said.

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