

Najib threatens to sue Harakah over stepson
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has threatened to sue PAS organ Harakah over an article about his stepson Riza Aziz.

Najib's lawyers handed a letter of demand to Harakah managing director Rosli Yaakub at 3pm today, according to an online report by Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia.

Also named in the letter of demand besides Rosli was the Harakah chief editor Taufik Yahya.

The letter of demand is on article entitled "Dana 1MDB biayai syarikat filem Riza Aziz?" (1MDB funds used to fund Riza Aziz's film company?).

The article, authored by Rosli, was published by Harakah Daily on Feb 12, in which the writer questions whether Riza benefited from 1MDB, a Finance Ministry entity.

The legal action is initiated by Najib in his personal capacity, the Utusan report says.

Najib is demanding that Harakah retract the article within 48 hours, cease repeating defamatory words in the article, publish an apology according to terms determined by him and give an undertaking not to repeat the defamatory words.

He is also seeking an unspecified amount of damages.

The letter of demand said if Harakah failed to comply with these demands, a writ of summons would be filed to that effect.

Najib, who is also finance minister, chairs the 1MDB advisory board.

Meteoric rise

Riza is the prime minister's wife Rosmah Mansor's son from her first marriage.

He has attracted much attention over his meteoric rise in Hollywood, helping to fund films such as 'The Wolf of Wall Street' and 'Dumb and Dumber'.

His purchase of a RM110 million penthouse in New York in 2012 also raised eyebrows over the source of his wealth.

Riza is seen to be close with individuals who were formerly or presently connected to 1MDB including billionaire Jho Low and Aabar Investment chief executive Ahmad Badawy al-Husseiny.

Low has denied playing an active role in 1MDB, stating that he was only an adviser to it when it still went by the name of Terengganu Investment Authority (TIA) in 2009.

Aabar Investment has strong business ties with 1MDB.

Riza, who bankrolled the Academy Awards-nominated 'The Wolf of Wall Street' through his company Red Granite Pictures, had claimed it was funded by Low and the latter's name had appeared in the credits of the film.

However, according to the New York Times, this explanation was later changed and Aabar's Ahmad was credited for the financing.

Najib's latest threat to sue comes amid controversy about his own wealth.

The New York Times had previously highlighted Najib's family wealth including their apparent jet-setting ways, penchant for luxury jewellery and stacks of money at his home as alleged by former aide Ariff Sabri Abdul Aziz (right), who is now an opposition MP.

The Prime Minister's Office raised eyebrows when it responded to the New York Times by explaining the premier's wealth, citing family inheritance.

The comment alluding to wealth inherited from Najib's father Abdul Razak Hussein, who is a former prime minister of Malaysia, appear to have irked his other siblings amid a reported rift in the family.

The Razak brothers responded with a joint statement on Tuesday, stating that such claims tainted their late father's good name.

"We wish to put on record that Abdul Razak was a highly-principled man, well known to all who knew him for his frugality and utmost integrity and any statement or inference to the contrary would be totally false and misleading to his memory and to his service and sacrifices for the nation," they said.

It was signed by four of five Razak's children, with the exception of Najib.