

Dr M to call Sirul, says Australian media
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to call former police commando Sirul Azhar Umar at Sydney's Villawood Immigration Detention Centre this month, according to the Sydney Morning Herald online service.

"Mahathir's protection could provide the move needed to get Sirul out of check in Malaysia's game of chess. For the man in the Villawood detention centre, the end game is clear, political asylum in Australia. For Malaysia and its tangled politics, though, almost anything could happen," the newspaper added.

In the news story titled: 'Sirul Azhar Umar: Who ordered the brutal murder of Atlantuyaa Shaariibuu?' journalist Eryk Bagshaw questioned the motive of the murder in his lengthy story and online video which lasted more than two minutes.

"The story began at 4pm on Oct 19, 2006, when Sirul met his police partner Azilah Hadri (photo) in the bustling central market of downtown Kuala Lumpur. In the humid marketplace, Azilah told him the the pair had been ordered to eliminate a glamorous Mongolian translator who had penetrated the upper echelons of Malaysia's political elite.

"The translator was Altantuya Shaariibuu, the 28-year-old lover of one of Mr Najib Abdul Razak's closest advisers. Somebody important believed she knew about corrupt payments to government officials that had emerged out of an international submarine deal.

"By 8.30pm on the night the order was issued, the pair had found Ms Shaariibuu and bundled her into a car. By 11pm she was on her knees in the depths of the dense tropical jungle that surrounds Kuala Lumpur, begging for the life of her unborn child," the newspaper reported.

It added: "In April, the political manoeuvring went to the next level when the most powerful force in Malaysian politics, retired prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad (photo), who ruled Malaysia for 22 years, met with Sirul's mother and urged publicly for a full investigation.

"Dr Mahathir said Sirul 'was acting upon orders and should be given the opportunity to state his case. A policeman does not kill people unless they are given the orders to do so'."

The statement from Mahathir directly contradicted his former protege and current Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib, who dismissed the case as "old news" and "utter rubbish".

The urging from the doyen of Malaysian politics come at a time when Najib's tenure is uncertain, Sydney Morning Herald added. "The popularity of the prime minister is sliding fast, and some believe the Sirul case could be the catalyst for the end of the United Malays National Organisation (Umno) political dynasty, which has ruled the country continuously

since 1957.

“The country’s controversial 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) financial fund is now up to US\$14 billion in debt, and allegations of improper overseas property purchases by his family and lavish over-spending by Najib’s wife, Rosmah Mansor, have simmered.

In April Mahathir publicly urged Najib’s resignation, six years after he was instrumental in bringing down former prime minister Abdullah Badawi, the newspaper said.

‘The quiet chat is done’

“This is the last resort, I have to go public,” he said. “The quiet chat is done.”

“I am answerable only to the people - not to any one individual,” Najib responded to his former mentor.

The former bodyguard to two Malaysian prime ministers is a baby-faced killer, convicted of a political murder so gruesome it made a nation shudder.

Now, facing the death penalty in Malaysia, Sirul has brought his secrets to Australia in search of political asylum. So far, he is sitting restlessly with the high-risk inmates at the maximum security Blaxland unit in Villawood, keeping his secrets to himself.