

Thais: Umno man bought stolen PetroSaudi docs
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An Umno member was among 10 people who purportedly purchased PetroSaudi International's data allegedly stolen by its former director Xavier Andre Justo, according to Singapore Straits Times.

Thai police spokesperson Prawuth Thavornsiri said Justo claimed he had sold the information to members of the group after he failed to blackmail PetroSaudi for 2.5 million Swiss francs in exchange for not releasing the information.

"Many people, about 10, from the media and from political circles, even from the same party as the (Malaysian) prime minister," he was quoted telling the Singapore daily.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is also Umno president.

According to the report, Prawuth declined to identify the 10 involved but said the negotiations to buy information from Justo had taken place in both Singapore and Thailand.

Prawuth said according to what was found in his WhatsApp transcripts, once the group had verified Justo's files contained the information they wanted, they discussed ways to pay him.

"They talked to each other many times by WhatsApp, we have the evidence; they talked about paying like this and like that, to pretend to buy and sell," he was quoted saying.

He said the payment method was similar to money laundering techniques used by gangs.

The PetroSaudi information sold by Justo had put 1MDB in a spot as it included email correspondence between PetroSaudi and 1MDB.

The information in the emails was one of the materials used by whistleblower website Sarawak Report to allege that 1MDB funds intended for a joint venture with PetroSaudi was siphoned to a company controlled by billionaire Jho Low, who is close to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's family.

Prawuth declined to say whether Sarawak Report was among the 10 which purchased information from Justo.

However, he said a news blog run by a Malaysian-born British citizen was involved and alleged that the portal had tampered with the information.

Sarawak Report has stood by its reports and has challenged critics to sue it.

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