

## **Khairuddin, Chang charged with banking 'sabotage'**

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Former Umno division leader Khairuddin Abu Hassan and his lawyer Matthias Chang have been charged with attempting to sabotage the country's banking and financial services.

They were jointly charged under Section 124L of the Penal Code, read together with Section 34 of the code.

They are accused of committing their acts between June 28 and Aug 26 this year, at investigating bodies in France, England, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Singapore.

If found guilty, they may face up to 15 years in jail.

Khairuddin (photo) and Chang are currently being held under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (Sosma), for which the trial comes under the jurisdiction of the High Court.

Magistrate Siti Radziah Kamardin gave the prosecution two weeks, until Oct 26, to gather evidence and sanctioned the case under Sosma.

Deputy public prosecutor Mohd Masri Daud earlier asked for one month before the case is transferred to the High Court, to allow investigators more time to gather evidence.

However, the defence argued that the case must be transferred to the High Court immediately, to determine whether or not the charge is applicable under Sosma.

The defence attempted to file a review of the ruling, but the High Court decided not to hear it.

### **No bail for a Sosma charge**

Lead counsel Mohd Haniff Khatri Abdulla said they will now discuss whether to bring the matter to the Court of Appeal, or to file a formal motion to object the magistrate's decision.

"As for the habeas corpus case, we will decide tomorrow whether to pursue it," Haniff told reporters outside the High Court.

A charge under Sosma would mean that Khairuddin and Chang cannot be bailed out during the trial.

It will also render their habeas corpus application meaningless.

Today, former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad (photo) and former ministers,

including Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, expressed concern over the government's 'persecution' of Khairuddin and Chang over 1MDB.

Khairuddin and Chang have been arrested under Sosma for offences under Sections 124K and 124L of the Penal Code.

Khairuddin was arrested on Sept 18, after both he and Chang were barred from leaving the country.

Chang was arrested almost a month later, last Friday.

Their arrests are related to the police reports Khairuddin lodged against 1MDB overseas, in which Chang acted as counsel.

The use of Sosma has been severely criticised as the law is meant to deal with terrorism.

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