

Sirul videos not recorded in detention, insists Australian immigration

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The Australian Immigration Department's investigations found that former police commando Sirul Azhar Omar did not record or distribute any videos to the media while he was held at the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre (VIDC) in Sydney.

This is based on checks on CCTV recordings, Sirul's appearance in the videos and the backdrop used in the video, the department said in a statement.

The statement was published by Australia's 60 Minutes programme on its website today.

"These factors support the Department's view that the video was made between the time of the Malaysian Federal Court decision and the time the individual entered immigration detention," the department said, adding that it had obtained two independent translations of the video recordings.

It said it is not possible for someone to have smuggled in the clothing Sirul wore or the flannel backdrop seen in the videos.

In a number of video recordings leaked to Malaysiakini, Sirul had among others said he was being used by certain quarters to slander others, but did not mention names.

Lawyer Americk Sidhu has earlier argued that Sirul recorded the videos after his detention as he had in one of the clips referred to a press conference by lawyer Kamarul Hisham and Hasnul Rezua Merican (photo), which happened on Dec 31, 2015.

Sirul also refers to the application he is making for permanent residency in Australia, Americk said.

Sirul fled to Australia prior to the Federal Court overturning his acquittal and convicting him and another former police commando, Azilah Hadri, of murdering Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu.

He was arrested in Brisbane by Australian immigration officials on Jan 19, 2015, after an Interpol red notice was issued. Azilah is currently on death row.

Americk has had a long association with the Altantuya case, most recently having acted as counsel for the late private investigator P Balasubramaniam's widow, A Santamil Selvi, in her RM1.9 million suit against Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, his wife Rosmah Mansor and five others.

He recently resigned as Selvi's counsel, after Selvi held a press conference hosted by a pro-BN NGO, to apologise to Rosmah for accusing her of causing her husband's fatal heart

attack.

Meanwhile, in another letter to 60 Minutes, the Australian Border Force said immigration detainees are free to contact any media representative.

“People in detention have access to computers, the internet, social media and telephones and there are no restrictions on who they may contact,” it said.

Sirul fled to Australia after sentenced to death for murdering Altantuya.

He is in an immigration limbo because Australian law bars the deportation of people facing death penalties in their home countries.

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