

Najib's defamation suit against Harakahdaily goes to trial
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's defamation suit against PAS mouthpiece *Harakahdaily* over its report related to his stepson Riza Aziz and 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) will go to trial.

High Court judge Hue Siew Kheng, who dismissed Najib's summary judgment application in chambers, said 'qualified privilege' and 'fair comment' were defences that needed to be tried and the case therefore could not be disposed of summarily.

Citing Justice Hue, Najib's lawyer Mohd Hafarizam Harun said the application, under Order 14A of the Rules of Court 2012, was dismissed as the questions were questions of facts and law and that the matter could only be resolved in a full trial.

Citing Justice Hue further, Hafarizam said the Public Accounts Committee's (PAC) report filed by Najib did not necessarily allow him not to go for trial and must instead be proven in court.

Najib had filed the PAC report, dated April 7, which states that he had no involvement with what happened to 1MDB.

Justice Hue also fixed June 9 as the date for the last case management and June 23 for the trial to commence.

"Therefore, she has dismissed the application, with costs of RM3,000, but subject to allocator," Hafarizam told reporters at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur today.

"In view of this, I have to see my client and obtain instructions whether to appeal or not."

A summary judgment is a court decision without going through a full trial where the case would be decided on points of law.

Hafarizam had submitted that the article was defamatory and the defences of qualified privilege and justification cannot be used following the PAC report on 1MDB.

Najib named *Harakah* managing director Dr Rosli Yaakop and *Harakahdaily* chief editor Taufek Yahya as defendants in the defamation suit filed on March 18 last year, following the publication of the article which was mainly based on a *New York Times* report.

In his statement of claim, Najib had said the article portrayed him as having misused 1MDB funds and that the publication of the article was intended to tarnish his reputation.

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