

**Jho Low charged with lobbying Trump administration and DOJ to drop
1MDB case**

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A US court has charged fugitive financier Low Taek Jho with using “back channels” in 2017 to lobby the Trump administration and the US Department of Justice (DOJ) to halt his 1MDB cases.

In a statement yesterday, the DOJ said the court had also charged American rapper Prakazrel “Pras” Michel for conspiring with the Malaysian.

They ultimately failed and the DOJ charged Low in 2018 for conspiring to launder billions from 1MDB.

Low, whose whereabouts are unknown, is wanted in Malaysia to stand trial over the alleged theft of billions from 1MDB. He is accused of facilitating former prime minister Najib Abdul Razak in the scandal.

Michel is known for being a member of hip-hop group Fugees.

Aside from the 1MDB case, the duo were accused of lobbying the Trump administration to extradite an unnamed Chinese “dissident” back to China.

These charges were stated in an updated indictment filed in a District of Columbia court on June 10.

According to the DOJ, Low and Michel were accused in the latest indictment for allegedly conspiring with others to engage in “undisclosed lobbying campaigns at the direction of Low and the vice-minister of public security for the People’s Republic of China, respectively, both to have the 1MDB embezzlement investigation and forfeiture proceedings involving Low and others dropped and to have a Chinese dissident sent back to China”.

At Low’s direction

Bloomberg reported that the dissident in question was possibly Guo Wengui, a billionaire businessperson presently in exile in the US.

Low and Michel were also charged with conspiring to “commit money laundering related to the foreign influence campaigns”.

The DOJ said that Michel alone was further charged with witness tampering and

conspiracy to make false statements to banks.

Parts of these allegations were previously revealed in a criminal complaint brought against a US-based political lobbyist accused of surreptitiously acting as Low's foreign agent.

Low faces between five and 10 years in prison for each charge if convicted.

Michel, meanwhile, faces between five to 20 years in prison for each charge if convicted.

This is not the first time the duo have been charged for conspiracy.

Low and Michel were previously charged with conspiring to steer illegal foreign funds into the 2012 US presidential election.

Low was accused of directing some US\$21.6 million (RM88.73 million) from foreign entities and accounts to be transferred to Michel so the American could disguise it as legitimate campaign contributions.

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