

## **Nazir considered publicly endorsing Harapan at peak of 1MDB scandal**

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In the run-up to the 14th general election, then CIMB chairperson Nazir Abdul Razak said it was plain to see that his sympathies were with Pakatan Harapan rather than BN - the coalition built by his father Abdul Razak Hussein and was being led then by his eldest brother Najib.

His support for the then-opposition had been spurred by the 1MDB scandal - which Najib had reportedly repeatedly ignored his warnings and advice.

Nazir said his support had mostly been behind the scenes, but at one point there was a discussion with his wife, Azlina Aziz, about going public.

"She was in favour of my stepping down as chairperson of CIMB in order to support the Harapan election campaign," he detailed in his recently published memoir, 'What's In A Name'.

Azlina, he said, had been a "significant sponsor" of the 'Pulang Mengundi'

campaign - which sought to help Malaysians make the journey back to their hometowns to vote.

By this point, Nazir and Najib's relationship had already been deeply strained by the 1MDB scandal.

Earlier, in January 2014, Nazir had written an opinion piece honouring his late father's legacy - of being frugal and responsible with public funds - which he hoped would be a subtle reminder to Najib in regard to 1MDB.

He said the article triggered cybertroopers to launch a campaign against him, Azlina, and their children.

They believed the attacks came from Najib's camp in retaliation to the opinion piece, which the latter reportedly conceded to.

"Azlina, more feisty than me, wanted to point the finger of blame at Najib and Rosmah (Mansor) publicly.

"I didn't want a public clash; instead, I called him (Najib).

"He denied knowledge of the attacks but conceded they might have come from

within his camp.

"People were angry with me, Najib explained, for writing the article," Nazir said.

Nazir speculated in his memoir that the smear campaign may have sought to scare him away from the 1MDB scandal, but instead only compelled him to get others to look into the wealth fund more deeply.

The incident also reportedly soured ties between Azlina and Najib, prompting the former to avoid social events with her brother-in-law, including a Ramadan dinner in 2015, at which Rosmah allegedly berated Nazir.

But despite his wife's advice for him to publicly support Harapan during the GE14 campaign, Nazir ultimately decided against it.

He came to the decision after receiving advice from former minister Rafidah Aziz and Ngaire Woods (the dean of the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University).

Rafidah reportedly told Nazir that going against Najib publicly would have broken their mother Rahah Noah's heart.

## **Exciting moment**

Meanwhile, Woods said that openly "stabbing" his brother would make Nazir a distrustful person.

Hence, Nazir said he resolved to remain in the background, "nudging, prompting, and encouraging" politicians and institutions to act.

When Harapan won the 2018 election, he said it was an exciting moment.

However, his familial ties with Najib, as well the help he gave Najib to cash RM25.7 million in cheques for the 2013 election - which would later turn out to be 1MDB-linked funds - ended up costing him his job as CIMB chairperson.

He said while then-prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad had wanted him to stay on, he was ultimately pushed out into early retirement in October 2018.

Meanwhile, in his memoir, Nazir was also critical of Harapan for failing to deliver on major reforms such as term limits for the prime minister's post, repealing the Sedition Act and enacting laws to curb racist remarks and actions.

However, he acknowledged that the cards were not stacked in Harapan's favour,

and it was merely continuing a pattern of elected governments failing to deliver on promised reforms.

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