

## **Najib's SRC review: Decision by March 31**

**Malaysiakini**

**28 February 2023**

**Hidir Reduan Abdul Rashid**

Najib Abdul Razak will know latest by March 31 whether he succeeds in his review application in his RM42 million SRC International corruption case.

The five-person apex bench chaired by Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Abdul Rahman Sebli this afternoon reserved its judgment in the bid by the former prime minister.

"We will decide on a date to be fixed later. Parties will be notified. Decision date no later than March 31," Rahman told the defence and prosecution teams, headed by defence counsel Muhammad Shafee Abdullah and deputy public prosecutor V Sithambaram respectively.

Today was the sixth day of the hearing of the former premier's review application over his conviction as well as a 12-year jail sentence and RM210 million fine in the case involving seven charges of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering.

The other members of the apex bench are Federal Court judges Vernon Ong Lam Kiat, Rhodzariah Bujang and Nordin Hassan, as well as Court of Appeal judge Abu Bakar Jais.

On Aug 23 last year, a separate Federal Court panel chaired by Chief Justice Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat dismissed Najib's appeal to quash his conviction as well as a 12-year jail sentence and RM210 million fine in the corruption case.

### **Review application**

Having exhausted his appeals before the Court of Appeal and the Federal Court, Najib has gone before the current Federal Court panel to hear his review over the case involving one count of abuse of power, three counts of criminal breach of trust, and three money laundering charges.

Incarcerated in Kajang Prison, Najib is also pursuing other avenues outside the judiciary, namely a petition for a royal pardon as well as a petition before the United Nations over his alleged arbitrary detention.

Through the present review application, Najib contends that trial judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali, who has since been elevated from the High Court to the Court of Appeal, was in a conflict of interest when he heard and decided on the

SRC International case in July 2020.

Najib claimed, among others, that the judge was allegedly aware that Maybank Investment (an entity of Maybank Group) and BinaFikir (another entity of Maybank Group) had advised sovereign wealth fund 1MDB in the matters pertaining to the setting up of SRC International.

Najib alleged that the conflict of interest arose due to Nazlan's previous role as a general counsel with Maybank.

Initially a subsidiary of 1MDB, SRC became fully owned by the Minister of Finance Incorporated (MOF Inc). 1MDB is also fully owned by MOF Inc.

Among the possible outcomes of the review are that Najib gets a full acquittal, has his appeal reheard by a different Federal Court bench, or that he gets a retrial of the SRC case.

Najib's review bid also targets the previous panel's three other decisions.

They are the decisions denying his bid to produce additional evidence to strengthen the allegations against Nazlan, rejecting his bid to postpone the appeal hearing, and denying his application to recuse Tengku Maimun over

alleged conflict of interest.

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