

**Mindef: French lawyers did not contact us
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The Defence Ministry has not received any official request from those involved in the probe by French authorities over arms deals involving French defence contractors Thales and DCN.

"Until now, the Malaysian government has yet to receive any official requests from any parties involved in the investigations by French lawyers.

"If the Malaysian government receives any applications through official channels, the government will cooperate accordingly," said Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Ahmad Zahid said this in his written parliamentary reply to Salahuddin Ayub (PAS-Kubang Kerian), who asked if the Defence Ministry was willing to cooperate with French lawyers involved in the probe.

suaram french submarine case 280410 lawyer joseph breham Salahuddin was referring to a team led by Joseph Breham (right), who is suing DCN on behalf of human rights group Suaram.

Suaram took on the suit by alleging that DCN paid 114 million euro (RM482 million) to Perimekar, a Malaysian company owned by the wife of Abdul Razak Baginda, who in turn is a close associate of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Breham, who was in Malaysia in April for a fact-finding mission, said that he could apply for Perimekar to divulge its account details.

According to Breham, the Malaysian case was opened after French prosecutors found that Perimekar was created only "a few months before" the submarine deal was inked.

PM: They have 'no case'

It was further alleged that the company had no experience in the submarine industry.

Breham said that the case will proceed before a judge if prosecutors are satisfied with the probe and Malaysian officials cannot be compelled to appear before the French court but they are encouraged to do so.

Thus far, French authorities have managed to compel DCN to pay a penalty of almost RM3 billion to the Taiwanese government as compensation for "unauthorised commission".

The Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce's International Court of Arbitration ruled on May 3 the reimbursement was for kickbacks paid in the 1991 sale of six Lafayette-class warships for US\$460 million each, nearly double the original cost.

On April 29, Najib has claimed that there was "no case" to answer in the French probe.