

**Whistleblower sues ACA, government, The Star
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Soon Li Tsin and Kuek Ser Kuang Keng**

Former Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) Sabah chief Mohamad Ramli Manan filed a civil suit against several government bodies and a major English-language daily at the Kuala Lumpur High Court this morning.

He named the ACA, head of the Pensions Department in the Public Services Commission, secretary and director of the Public Services Department (PSD), the government and The Star Publications (M) Bhd as defendants.

Ramli is seeking compensation and damages on grounds of alleged "libel, slander, malicious prosecution and reckless falsehood", with the claims involving different parties.

He is the whistleblower behind several serious allegations against his former boss, ACA director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor, which the latter has since denied.

The statement of claims cites a total of RM142,377.40 plus eight percent interest as back-pay, bonuses and pension and compensation for income loss due to the agency's failure to promote him.

It comprises RM8,977.40 for pay and bonus deducted from two months in 2003, and RM133,400 as compensation for loss of promotion-based income.

According to Ramli, he was put in 'cold storage' for six years until his retirement after he was transferred out of Sabah.

He has not been receiving his pension on retirement last year.

As Sabah ACA chief in 2000, Ramli headed the investigation into then land and cooperative development minister Kasitah Gaddam for corruption involving a multi-million dollar share deal.

It has been suggested that certain quarters were not happy with his probe against Kasitah.

Ramli is further suing the ACA over a number of allegedly "oppressive measures" against him including:

- * Failure to approve his transfer to another government body;
- * Surveillance over him at home and in the office since 2003, resulting in distressed caused to him and his family;
- * Removal of his name from the ACA payroll with malicious intention to withhold his pay without justifiable reason;
- * Sending a report to the PSD with a recommendation to terminate his employment for reasons unknown to him;
- * Sending ACA officers to the PSD with the intention of intimidating the officers to act

quickly against him; and

* Giving him an adverse performance report in 2002.

The legal action against The Star arose following publication of a news report on March 2, which he described as "defamatory".

It quoted an unnamed official as saying he had been investigated at departmental level for absence from work without official leave prior to his retirement last year.

He has insisted that the claim is not true and that the report was published to discredit him.

'Phone bugged'

Reporters and photographers from the main news agencies waited for Ramli at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur's Wisma Denmark, having gotten wind that he was to file a suit this morning.

However, no one knew what he looked like and he did not directly identify himself when he arrived.

When he passed several copies of the statement of claims to a photographer for distribution to journalists, the pack trailed him to the car park.

Ramli explained why he has stayed out of the media spotlight up to now: "There is no security problem - I just don't want to expose myself."

During the 10-minute impromptu press conference, he said his phone has been bugged since 2003.

Quizzed as to who was behind this, he pointed upwards and replied softly: "The ACA-lah. They have the gadget (that enables this)."

He also claimed that no one in authority had contacted him over his allegations against Zulkipli until the media picked up the issue at a press conference called on Feb 26 by Movement for Democracy and Anti-Corruption (Gerak) chairperson Ezam Mohd Nor.

Ramli said he had written to the ACA deputy director-general in 2004 to complain (about Zulkipli, photo) but got no response. He then tried to meet Zulkipli early last year, but did not succeed.

Prior to serving in Sabah, Ramli was deputy director in the ACA's Perak, Kedah and Negri Sembilan offices and director in Kelantan.

Ramli said that he was quizzed by the police for 10 hours on Monday over his allegations.

He, along with his ex-boss Zulkipli, has been called to go before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Integrity next Monday.

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