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Najib applies to strike out parts of Mkini's defence

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and Umno's executive secretary Datuk Ab Rauf Yusoh have applied to strike out some parts of the defence and counter claim filed by a news portal and its editors against his libel suit.

Counsel Nor Hazira Abu Haiyan, who appeared for Najib and Ab Rauf, told reporters that the application was made on the grounds that the parts in the papers filed by Mkini Dotcom Sdn Bhd, its editor-in-chief Steven Gan and its chief editor Fathi Aris Omar were frivolous, vexatious and an abuse of the court process.

Najib and Ab Rauf are seeking

to strike out more than 50 paragraphs.

The matter was raised in chambers during case management before High Court deputy registrar Norfauzani Mohd Nordin yesterday.

She said the court has fixed May 6 to hear the application.

On May 30, last year, Najib filed the suit in his personal capacity and Ab Rauf, on behalf of Umno, claiming that the three defendants had reported, produced and allowed the publishing of two articles titled "A case of the PM reaping what he sows" and "How much will Najib spend to keep Terengganu?" on

May 14.

The plaintiffs claimed that the articles were carried in the "Yoursay" column of the news portal *www.malaysiakini.com* by the defendants themselves or their assistants based on comments from the portal's subscribers or users which were then grouped into the articles under the major topics.

Najib and Ab Rauf claimed that the defendants had deliberately allowed the publication of the articles although they knew they were baseless accusations and untruths.

Najib claimed the defamatory words had tarnished his reputation

as a politician, as Umno president and as Prime Minister.

The two plaintiffs contended that the defamatory words were also designed to portray Umno as having abused its authority in the interests of the party, that it was an undemocratic party and which deliberately created undesirable situations.

They are also seeking aggravated damages, excessive damages, interest, an injunction to restrain the defendants or their assistants from publishing the articles, an order that the defendants issue a written apology to be published in the newspapers, and costs.