

# 'Najib was expecting to be acquitted of all charges'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Datuk Seri Najib Razak was shocked that he had been ordered to enter his defence against all seven charges of abusing SRC International Sdn Bhd funds.

"He was expecting to be acquitted of all the charges," Najib's lawyer, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, said.

The lead counsel in Najib's defence team said the former prime minister had anticipated an acquittal as the defence had rebutted every single point raised by the prosecution.

"So, of course, he was surprised. 'Shocked' is the word."

Najib, in a Facebook post later, said the ruling would enable him to call his own witnesses.

He said only the prosecution had been giving their version of events.

"By giving the defence an opportunity to call our witnesses, it will enable me to give a true picture of the events and prove that I am not guilty," he said.

"*InshaAllah*, this is an opportunity to clear my name in court."

Shafee said he, too, had anticipated an acquittal based on their overwhelming submissions.

However, he said, one could never predict the outcome of a trial as a judge would have his own views and interpretation of things.

"What can I say, the learned judge saw things differently and we respect his views.

"I am sad that the defence was called, but in many ways I am also happy for two reasons. One is you will now hear the real story from Najib, his version of what happened in SRC International. We will hear whether or not he was actually in control of SRC International."

On how long he expected the defence to present its case, Shafee said it might take up to March or April before the trial was concluded.

However, he said, the case might go on until after the next general election if it went to the Court of Appeal and the Federal Court.

On how the ruling would affect Najib's 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) trial, Shafee said "technically, it wouldn't".

"This is SRC International, where it involves local transactions. It is not 1MDB's money.

"I think we are doing well in the 1MDB trial. I mean you have heard all the witnesses and you have to stop and ask for a while

whether this is a joke," he said, adding that he planned to call several witnesses to testify during the defence stage, including professionals and experts.

On fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho's recent settlement with the United States Department of Justice (DoJ) and how it would affect Najib's defence strategy, Shafee said it would not harm his case.

"It actually indicates that Low was the one who has got something to worry about. Apart from pulling a Houdini on us, the others who were complicit have also disappeared and are on the run.

"The fact that he has settled US\$1 billion (RM4.1 billion) shows that he took the money. In fact, you and I know he took something like US\$5 billion or US\$6 billion."

Shafee said Najib was not going to run away from the fact that he knew Low.

He said his client was, however, going to dispute that he knew about Low's criminal intentions.

"You must bear in mind that in this case you have to distinguish whether Najib was naive or too trusting from whether he had a criminal mind, like that of Low's.

"To convict him you must be satisfied that he had the same mind as Low.

"In terms of 1MDB, all the money that was sent to him were donations. What did he spend it on? Did he buy Balenciaga, Bally or other branded items? He spent it all on welfare and political purposes, you know that."

Shafee said one has to ask whether this was the mentality of a thief or that of a person who was too trusting of the people around him.

It was reported that DoJ had reached a settlement to recover more than US\$700 million worth of assets from Low and his family using funds misappropriated from 1MDB.

The assets are located in the United States, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

The settlement, DoJ said, forced Low and his family to relinquish hundreds of millions of dollars in ill-gotten gains that were intended to be used for the benefit of the Malaysian people.

Low however, maintained that the agreement does not constitute an admission of guilt, liability or any form of wrongdoing by him or the asset owners.