

NAJIB DROPS SHAFEE FROM SRC APPEAL

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Ex-PM changed defence team after consulting S'porean lawyers and senior advocates from India

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DATUK Seri Najib Razak said his decision to change lawyers to handle his SRC International appeal at the Federal Court was taken after consultations with lawyers in Singapore and senior advocates from India.

He said another reason for his decision to drop Messrs Shafee and Co from handling his final bid to overturn his conviction was after Queen's Counsel Jonathan Laidlaw was not allowed to fight his case.

Najib, in a statement yesterday, confirmed the appointment of Messrs Zaid Ibrahim, Suflan, TH Liew & Partners (ZIST) as solicitors for his SRC appeal, with senior lawyer Hisyam Teh Poh Teik as lead counsel.

The former prime minister expressed confidence that the new team would bring new perspec-



Hisyam Teh Poh Teik

tives to his defence, especially on the conflict of interest accusations.

"The charge of conflict of interest is a serious one, both for the judge and the litigants. The application is filed in court in that regard.

"I would not want to comment on the issue as the matter is pending before the Federal Court."

Najib, however, added that his previous lead counsel, Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, would continue to handle his other cases that were before the courts.

He expressed his support and appreciation to the legal team for its continued commitment and

effort in ensuring that he was given a fair trial.

The former Umno president also said it was unfair of some media companies to conclude or report that he had fallen out with Shafee by running headlines that said he had evicted or ditched Messrs Shafee and Co.

It was earlier reported that Najib had replaced his long-time counsel Shafee with Zaid's firm to handle his final appeal at the Federal Court.

Shafee said he received a letter from Najib about 5pm on Monday informing him that he had been discharged from representing the Pekan member of parliament and former Umno president in the appeal proceedings.

He notified the court that his firm would hand all case documents to ZIST immediately.

Shafee has led Najib's defence in the SRC International case from the time he was charged.

In 2020, Najib was convicted of all seven charges of power abuse, criminal breach of trust and money laundering in relation to RM42 million of SRC International funds.

High Court judge Datuk Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali had sentenced him to 12 years' jail and RM210 million fine.

Since then, Najib has lost in his bids to overturn the conviction and sentence at the Court of Appeal, to introduce fresh evidence



The defence team led by Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah is no longer representing former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in the SRC International case. FILE PIC

and to appoint a Queen's Counsel to represent him.

Immediately after news of the new lawyers' appointment, Najib's new defence team said they

would be seeking an adjournment to the Aug 15 to 26 dates that had been fixed for the hearing of their client's appeal at the Federal Court.