

# Najib's fate in 'court of compassion'

## King has the final say on application for royal pardon, says Azalina

By BENJAMIN LEE  
benkh@thestar.com.my

**PUTRAJAYA:** Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform), Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said, believes the fate of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's 12-year prison sentence is now in the hands of the "court of compassion."

She said, Umno no longer had a part to play as all legal avenues have been exhausted and that the King will now have the final say with regard to Najib's application for a royal pardon.

"There is no other legal procedure left, only the court of compassion, meaning it's at the discretion of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and we cannot force it," she told reporters after the launch of a public information website on disputes involving the so-called "Sulu heirs" yesterday.

On April 7, Umno secretary-general Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki said the party was appealing to the King to consider granting a royal pardon to Najib.

This comes following Umno's supreme council decision to ask the King to consider granting a royal pardon to Najib as per Article 42(1) of the Federal Constitution on April 8.

This drew significant criticism, with former Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar claiming that Umno had no legal standing to submit the appeal on Najib's behalf on Monday.

On a separate issue, Azalina refused to comment further over recent claims by backbencher Selayang MP William Leong that she was in contempt of court with regard to Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) investigations into the trial judge

for Najib's SRC International Sdn Bhd case.

Azalina said she did not want to add anything further.

A news report cited a leaked letter dated March 20 with regard to a reply by Azalina to Najib's lawyer Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah linked to the MACC's comments on its probe on the SRC trial judge.

On April 6, Azalina issued a statement saying that her reply letter to Najib's lawyer contained the same information she had previously told the Dewan Rakyat on Feb 23 when replying to oral questions raised by Tenggara MP Manndzri Nasib and Tasek Gelugor MP Datuk Wan Saiful Wan Jan.

Meanwhile, she said a public website has been launched by the government to provide information on cases related to self-styled Sulu heirs' claims over Malaysia's assets.

Azalina said, the website provides clear and accurate information while combating the potential spread of rumours on the alleged Sulu heirs' claims.

"This will ensure that both Malaysians and the international community are able to follow the development of this case transparently and based on truth.

"It will be constantly updated with any new information, documents and more from time to time in accordance with the development of this case," she said during the launch of the website earlier yesterday.

She said the website [malaysia-sulucase.gov.my](http://malaysia-sulucase.gov.my), which operates only in English, would also have other language options.

Azalina added, the website provides users with a summary of the historical ties between Malaysia and the Sulu Sultanate, while displaying clear chronological narratives of any Sulu heirs'

related claims.

In February last year, the Paris Court of Arbitration, through arbitrator Gonzalo Stampa, ordered Malaysia to pay US\$14.9bil (RM65.7bil) to the self-proclaimed heirs.

On July 11, 2022, an attachment order was served on PETRONAS Azerbaijan (Shah Deniz) and PETRONAS South Caucasus by bailiffs representing the eight alleged Sulu heirs.

On March 14, the Paris Court of Appeal dismissed the Sulu claimants' bid to enforce the US\$14.9bil purported final award, saying that the challenge filed by the Sulu claimants is inadmissible.

On April 11, one of the self-proclaimed heirs, Fuad A Kiram, was declared a terrorist by the Home Ministry over his links to the Royal Sulu Force, a terrorist group that was prosecuted for the armed incursion in Lahad Datu, Sabah, in 2013.