

'No official denial from Saudi royals on donation'

Najib cites silence as proof of funds legitimacy

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Saudi Arabian royal family has never issued any official statement to deny that the funds channelled into Datuk Seri Najib Razak's personal bank account were not a donation, the High Court heard.

Najib, 71, testified that the lack of denial from the royal family bolstered his belief that the funds he received were legitimate donations.

He said there were instances, such as allegations of Saudi involvement in the Sept 11 terrorist attack when classified documents were leaked in 2021, where Saudi Arabia issued official statements to address and refute claims although such statements often come from its government or embassies rather than from the royal household directly.

"In contrast, despite the intense scrutiny surrounding the funds I received and allegations questioning their legitimacy, there has been no official statement, neither from the Royal Household nor from the Saudi government, denying that these funds were a donation from His Majesty King Abdullah.

"This absence of denial, even in the face of such high-profile allegations, supports my genuine belief that the funds were legitimate donations.

"It is consistent with how governments or monarchies typically respond when claims are

unfounded," he said in his witness statement here on Friday.

The former prime minister also said that his belief was further validated in 2016 by the then Saudi Foreign Minister, Adel Al-Jubair, who publicly confirmed that the funds were a donation from Saudi Arabia.

"What else could I have reasonably done to verify this further?" Najib said.

Najib said his belief was not based on mere assumption but supported by remittances which clearly stated that they were from the joint account of two Saudi Princes - Prince Faisal bin Turki bin Bandar Al Saud and Prince Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud - and the Ministry of Finance, Riyadh and companies which he believed were connected to either the Saudi government or King Abdullah.

He also contended that the remittances in his Islamic account were supported by donation letters accompanying the funds, which clearly outlined its purpose and source.

"To this day, no one officially mandated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has refuted these facts, and I relied on all these elements in good faith," Najib said.

Najib also told the court that he held no grudges against those who committed "injustice" towards him in the RM2.28bil 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) case.

He said he would not "exact revenge" as it was not his charac-



In his defence: Najib at the High Court attending the 1MDB trial in Kuala Lumpur. - Bernama

ter to do such a thing.

"Let me explain, to those who planned and executed this injustice, I will not exact revenge because it is not within me to put myself as low and for the government institutions to behave as such," he said.

Najib named his "accusers", which included prosecution witnesses Datuk Amhari Effendi Nazaruddin (former special officer), Datuk Shahrol Azral Ibrahim Halmi (former 1MDB CEO), Jasmine Loo (former 1MDB general counsel), Mohd Hazem Abd Rahman (former 1MDB CEO), Azmi Tahir (former 1MDB chief financial officer), Tan Sri Ismee Ismail (former 1MDB director), Tan Sri Mohd Bakke Salleh (former 1MDB director), Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz (former Bank Negara governor), Datuk Siti Zauyah Mohd Desa (former Finance Ministry deputy secretary-general), and Datuk Seri

Mohd Husni Hanadzlah (former finance minister II).

Najib said the individuals had, in their desperate attempt to save themselves, made up lies upon lies to implicate him.

"They twisted the facts with fiction and storytelling for their own freedom and to cover their own weaknesses and mistakes.

"They live freely without any legal repercussions nor remorse that easily by only giving their testimonies to the court to implicate me and put me in the midst of the offences they had clearly committed," he added.

On Oct 30, Najib was ordered by the High Court to enter his defence on four counts of using his position to obtain RM2.28bil gratification from 1MDB's funds and 21 counts of money laundering involving the same amount.

The hearing continues before Justice Collin Lawrence Sequerah on Jan 6.