

Najib sorry over 1MDB scandal

Former PM publicly apologises but maintains his innocence

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak has publicly apologised to all Malaysians over the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal which occurred during his tenure as Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

In a statement read by his son Datuk Mohd Nizar Najib at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex where his trial is currently being held, Najib said he decided to make the statement after much reflection during his 26 months in jail and following significant recent developments relating to 1MDB.

"It pains me to know the 1MDB debacle happened under my watch as the minister of finance and prime minister.

"For that, I would like to apologise unreservedly to Malaysian people," Nizar read out the statement at a press conference here yesterday.

Najib expressed "deep shock" over the extent of the multi-billion ringgit 1MDB scandal but that recent evidence has supported his claims of not collaborating with



Clearing the air: Nizar reading out Najib's statement at the Kuala Lumpur Court Complex. — Bernama

fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho or Jho Low.

"I have already been punished politically; as I am clearly not the mastermind and neither did I collaborate with Jho Low as recent events have shown, I should not be victimised legally," he said.

On hindsight, Najib acknowledged that he should have acted differently when suspicions about 1MDB first arose.

"I did initiate various investigations but I was inclined to believe the explanations by the board and management."

Najib said his immediate concerns were focused on 1MDB's financial struggles and the potential damage to diplomatic relations.

He also highlighted the recent court hearings in Switzerland, where PetroSaudi International Ltd (PSI) executives were convicted, and an article by *The Edge*, which further analysed the case quoting internal PSI emails.

The revelations, he said, showed that he was not the mastermind and did not collaborate with Jho Low.

According to Najib, the article had concluded that PSI and Jho Low deceived him and that he was unaware of the siphoning out of 1MDB money.

"As hard as it is for some people to fathom, I was advised and honestly believed at the time that the funds I received were political donations from Saudi Arabia.

"As established by court proceedings, there were indeed two confirmed large donations in 2010 from the government of Saudi Arabia.

"Those were not the subject of any criminal nor civil proceedings," he said.

While "deeply regretful" over the turn of events at SRC International Sdn Bhd and 1MDB, Najib maintained that being legally held accountable for actions he neither initiated nor knowingly enabled is "unfair" and expressed hope that the judicial process will prove his innocence.

Najib, who is facing four charges of abusing his position to obtain RM2.3bil from 1MDB and an additional 21 money laundering charges involving the same amount, will know his fate on Oct 30.

Justice Datuk Collin Lawrence Sequerah will decide on whether to call Najib to enter his defence on the charges or acquit him.

After reading Najib's statement, Mohd Nizar, who is also the Pahang investment, industry, science, technology and innovation committee chairman, thanked all the media practitioners for attending the press conference.

"I hope for victory to be on my father's side," he said.

Mohd Nizar, however, did not respond to questions from reporters.