

Minister insists Scorpene lawyer deportation not political

The Malaysian Insider

July 25, 2011

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 25 — The government insisted today that the deportation of [William Bourdon](#) a day after the French lawyer spoke in Penang on the administration's controversial RM7 billion purchase of the Scorpene submarine was not a political decision.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein told reporters today that Bourdon, who is pursuing judicial investigations in French courts over allegations of kickbacks to a Malaysian company linked to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, was sent home to Paris for violating conditions of his tourist visa.

"He broke the conditions of his visa," said Hishammuddin. "Because this is a high-profile case, people are selectively choosing to say it is political. People get deported every day."

Asked if it was because of what Bourdon had said at the fundraiser of human rights group Suaram in Penang — he was set to speak at two more fundraisers over the weekend — Hishammuddin said: "I don't know what it is but certain he cannot give a speech," before leaving for another engagement.

He was speaking to reporters after he signed a refugee swap agreement between Malaysia and Australia with Australian Minister of Immigration and Citizenship Chris Bowen.

Immigration officers detained Bourdon on board the aircraft when he landed at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport from Penang on Friday.

The purchase of two submarines from French defence company DCNS in 2002 was made when Najib was still defence minister and a company run

by Abdul Razak Baginda, said to be a close aide of the prime minister, was reported to have received over RM500 million in commission from the deal.

Human rights groups and opposition parties here also linked the episode to the 2006 murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shariibuu.

In December 2009, Suaram filed a complaint with the French courts asking for access to information regarding government contracts signed with Abdul Razak's Perimekar Sdn Bhd and other information classified as official secrets in Malaysia.

The French courts accepted the request to investigate claims of graft in the RM500 million payment from DCNS to Perimekar.

The case is set to begin in September once a judge is selected for a hearing that Bourdon and opposition leaders here believe will reveal crucial documents pertaining to the deal.

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