

## **Zaki: Kept My Promise Of Not Presiding Over Umno Cases**

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PUTRAJAYA, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- Soon to retire Chief Justice Tun Zaki Azmi has kept his promise of not presiding over Umno cases during his almost three year term.

"I did not hear a single Umno or political case," said Zaki, 66, who will be retiring on Sept 12, during an interview with Bernama at his office at the Palace of Justice here.

The former Umno legal adviser's appointment as the country's 12th Chief Justice in 2008 led to much controversy with some quarters alleging that it could result in conflict of interests.

He said he also remained impartial about the outcome of such cases and as to who were the judges appointed to hear them.

He denied allegations of manipulation at the Appellate and Federal Court levels, which claimed lower court decisions not in favour of the government were set aside.

"I don't manipulate. I think of Allah. That's more important. If I am unfair or decide without following the law, then I am responsible to Allah. To me that's more important. Not worth any money or whatever," he said.

In fact, Zaki explained that during both his terms as Chief Justice and Court of Appeal President, he was never involved in setting up the panel of judges to preside over Umno related cases and had given the responsibility to former Court of Appeal President, Tan Sri Alauddin Mohd Sheriff instead.

On the issue of judges favoring the government, Zaki said, "That is beyond my control."

"If I wanted to influence anyone I could have easily controlled the young judges or the Judicial Commissioners because they wanted promotions but I never touched them," he said.

When the young Judicial Commissioners decide against the government and it is reversed by three experienced Court of Appeal judges, whose decision should be accepted, he questioned.

Zaki added that he had no direct knowledge of the Federal Court political case related to the appointment of Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir as Perak Menteri Besar.

He said he only read about it in the papers that the court had declared its validity.

He had even once decided in favour of a party opposing Felda (the Federal Land Development Authority) and ordered Felda to pay RM11 million in damages, he said.

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