

PKR asks if PM sent lawyer to Paris over Scorpene hearing
The Malaysian Insider
April 18, 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, April 18 — PKR demanded today Datuk Seri Najib Razak explain the "secret mission" he and his wife gave to senior Umno lawyer Datuk Seri Shafee Abdullah that entails travelling to Paris, suggesting that it is related to the ongoing Scorpene submarine sale probe by French authorities.

Secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution had exposed in Parliament last night a letter allegedly penned by Shafee claiming that he has been "appointed on behalf of the government" in particular by the prime minister and Datin Sri Rosmah Mansor to undertake a "sensitive legal assignment" abroad that "must be completed before the general election."

PKR lawmakers handed out to reporters copies of the letter addressed to Chief Justice Tan Sri Ariffin Zakaria, Court of Appeal president Tan Sri Md Raus Sharif and Chief Judge Malaya Tan Sri Zulkefli Ahmad Makinudin on March 23 seeking for a postponement of Shafee's cases from April 1 to 25.

They said that the letter has been verified by opposing lawyers, including Bar Council president Lim Chee Wee, who received the letter when their cases were delayed.

"We want the PM to clarify whether Shafee is going to Paris in relation to the Scorpene case.

"When we see Paris, we think of the Scorpene case which the prime minister has sworn he is not involved in and that he does not know Altantuya," PKR treasurer William Leong Jee Keen said, referring to the murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibu which has been linked to the submarine deal.

In the letter, copied to Najib and Rosmah, Shafee is alleged to have said the "nature of this legal assignment is confidential, at present" but he could meet the judges to explain.

The letter also states that as a result of the "assignment", Shafee would have to travel to several cities abroad including New York, London, Dubai, Paris and Basel.

"What is this secret mission? Is such a practice allowed where a lawyer can ask to meet the top judges in private?" Saifuddin added today.

De facto law minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz had told Parliament last night the government had not appointed Shafee for the alleged mission abroad, pointing out that the purported letter had mentioned Rosmah's name.

"This is not a government appointment because the government cannot appoint a lawyer to represent the prime minister's wife," he said.

When asked by Subang MP R. Sivarasa whether Shafee had then committed an offence by claiming his appointment was by the government, Nazri noted that the latter may have committed "misrepresentation".

"But it is not against the Constitution and has nothing to do with this Act," he said.

But Sivarasa said today Putrajaya must bring a complain to the Bar Council against Shafee as he had "misrepresented to the three highest judges" that he had been appointed by the government.

"Our PM must also explain what cases he is involved in, whether they are civil or criminal suits, as this is now a matter of public interest. He can no longer say this is a private matter and as the chief executive of the country, we want to know if he is involved in any unlawful activities," the PKR political bureau member added.

Recent media reports have pinned Najib to the RM7.3 billion Scorpene submarine deal by French authorities.

Altantuya's alleged one-time lover Abdul Razak Baginda, who was said to be a close associate of Najib, was acquitted of a charge of abetting two Special Action Squad members – Azilah Hadri and Sirul Azhar Umar – to commit the murder in 2006.

Last week, Altantuya's father Dr Setev Shaariibuu told a press conference in Petaling Jaya that he had offered himself as a witness in the Scorpene submarine probe, claiming that his testimony would be able to "connect the dots" between her death and the Scorpene" case, which will be heard in a French court soon.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pkr-asks-if-pm-sent-lawyer-to-paris-over-scorpene-hearing/>