

**RM40m 'donation' held privately by Umno man, ex-BN MP claims  
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By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 24 — The RM40 million “political donation” to Sabah Umno at the centre of a controversy involving Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman was remitted into the personal bank account of “an Umno leader”, a former Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) lawmaker has alleged.

Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing, now an independent MP for Tuaran, said in an emailed statement last night that the family members of this “Umno leader” have been able to withdraw from this account “bit by bit”, drawing question marks over claims by BN leaders that the funds were meant for Sabah Umno’s use.

“Were these withdrawals approved by Umno?”

“If the money was meant to be donated to Umno, why was it remitted into an individual and personal bank account?” he said in the statement.

The former deputy president of Sabah-based BN party United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO) did not, however, reveal the identity of the Umno leader or provide proof to back his claim.

Bumburing also questioned BN’s apparent refusal to reveal the source of the funds, saying this appeared to suggest that the ruling pact and its leaders were condoning corruption.

He singled out Sabah Umno secretary Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, pointing out that the Kota Belud MP has repeatedly defended the donation by saying there was nothing wrong with such contributions.

“His (Abdul Rahman) admission also leaves many unanswered questions such as where did the money come from?”

“Is the money tax-exempted or did the donor paid income tax on the money donated?” he asked.

Bumburing and fellow Sabah lawmaker Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin recently left their respective posts in BN to pledge allegiance to the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) federal opposition pact, citing their growing disillusionment with the Najib administration.

In Parliament earlier this month, it was revealed that Musa had been cleared of corruption after the local authorities declared that the RM40 million in question was a “political donation” to Sabah Umno and was not meant for the chief minister’s personal use.

According to previous reports, the probe was first kicked off in 2008 at the request of the Hong Kong’s Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), after a businessman was allegedly arrested when attempting to smuggle the cash back to Malaysia.

But findings by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) later cleared Musa's name and subsequently led to the ICAC closing its probe against the Sabah Umno chief.

Opposition lawmakers here have, however, been dissatisfied with the closure of the matter and are demanding the Najib administration explain the source of the donation and the exact events leading up to the probe on Musa.

According to Sarawak Report, the whistleblower site that first exposed the case online, Sabah timber trader Michael Chia had been caught in the Hong Kong International Airport with the cash in Singapore currency.

At the time, Chia had reportedly told the Hong Kong authorities that the money was meant for Musa.

In its April exposé, Sarawak Report had also revealed documents allegedly from Hong Kong's ICAC, showing that a Sabah lawyer was holding some US\$30 million (RM90 million) in a Swiss bank account for Musa.

The report also claimed that a paper trail showed that the millions in euros as well as US, Hong Kong and Singapore dollars had been channelled from several firms managed by the Hong Kong-based Chia to a number of British Virgin Islands companies and subsequently to the lawyer's Swiss account.

But when clarifying the issue in Parliament on Monday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said that Chia was never arrested with the cash in Hong Kong and was never caught by the ICAC.

Nazri said the RM40 million was actually frozen in an investment account in Hong Kong, which was later meant to be transferred to an account in a Swiss bank.

"That is my understanding of the case," he told the House.

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