

Anwar demands apology from Utusan, TV3 over Sabah accusations
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By Syed Jaymal Zahiid

PETALING JAYA, March 4 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has demanded government-owned Utusan Malaysia and TV3 apologise for their reports linking him to the Filipino militant incursion of Sabah.

Lawyers representing the opposition leader said they would proceed to sue the two entities for RM100 million should they fail to apologise, retract and pay damages for their reports that called Anwar (picture) the “dalang (instigator)” behind the security crisis which have left eight police officers and one civilian dead.

“It is a baseless, slanderous and malicious report,” lawyer N. Surendran told a press conference here, adding that letters of demand were sent to Utusan and TV3 this morning.

“The reports were intended to mislead the Malaysian public on the main issue which is on national security,” he added.

Malay daily Utusan Malaysia and TV3 had both picked up a news report from the Philippine Daily Inquirer titled “Philippine govt intel eyes 3 groups abetting Sulu sultan’s claim”.

The Philippine news report on Friday cited unnamed intelligence sources there when reporting that the Malaysian opposition here was allegedly one of three groups that could have backed the Sulu rebels’ claim on Sabah.

It said that a Philippine intelligence officer pointed to an unnamed individual from the opposition allied to Anwar, adding that the figure was looking to contest a Sabah seat in Election 2013.

Utusan also cited a February 14 report from newswire Reuters, where a Philippine military officer reportedly said a Malaysian opposition politician had invited the Sulu men to discuss land matters.

The Manila Times was also quoted by Utusan where it was reportedly claimed that the incursion was related to the Malaysian opposition’s campaign to give Sabah autonomy if they win.

Anwar, who was speaking at a rally in Penang last night, was said to have been visibly upset at the allegations, which he said was an attempt to detract attention from genuine concern over national security issues.

The PKR adviser was reported by news portal Malaysiakini as telling a 2,000-strong crowd in Seberang Jaya that he had nothing to with the Filipino Muslim clan claiming lineage from the Sulu sultanate that grants them ownership of Sabah.

“Even if I met them, what’s the issue? Who in the government has never met with Haj Murad Ebrahim, the leader of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or Nor Misuari?” he asked.

Nor Musuari, sometimes spelled Nur Misuari, heads the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), another Filipino Muslim faction seeking autonomy from Manila.

Speaking to reporters today, Anwar said the meeting with Nor Musuari had no relation to the security situation in Lahad Datu.

"Nor Musuari met with everyone and yes I met him but what does that have to do with anything. The group in Sabah is a different group," he said.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar said last night that six policemen was killed and another critically injured in a shootout with armed militants in Kampung Selamat, Semporna.

The incidents around Semporna are just 150km away from another coastal town, Lahad Datu, where there is still a tense standoff between Malaysian security forces and Filipino militants a day after 14 people were killed in a gunfire exchange.

The Filipino militants have been here for nearly three weeks, claiming that Sabah belongs to them although the land has been part of Malaysia for decades..

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