

Azilah, Sirul not challenging RM100 million suit filed by Altantuya's father, say lawyers

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By V. Anbalagan, Assistant News Editor

Former police commandos Chief Inspector Azilah Hadri and Corporal Sirul Azhar Umar who were sentenced to death for the murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibuu will not respond to the RM100 million suit filed by the victim's father.

Lawyers Datuk Hazman Ahmad, who represented Azilah, and Datuk Kamarul Hisham Kamaruddin, who appeared for Sirul during the criminal trial, said they have not received any instructions from the two convicts on the civil suit.

"I have written to the legal firm (Karpal & Co) to inform them that I have no instructions to act for Azilah," said Hazman.

Kamarul gave a similar reply when asked if he would enter defence in the suit filed by Altantuya's father, Setev Shaariibuu.

Azilah is now being kept in solitary confinement at Sungai Buloh prison after the Federal Court allowed the government's appeal against their acquittal.

Sirul left for Australia before the apex court delivered the final verdict but was arrested in Queensland on January 20 and is being held at Sydney's Villawood Immigration Centre following a red alert issued by Interpol.

Meanwhile, lawyer Ramkarpal who is representing Setev, said obtaining a default judgment was an option available to his client.

Setev filed the suit in 2007, a year after his 28-year-old daughter was murdered.

Both policemen did not enter their defence, unlike the Malaysian government and Altantuya's lover Abdul Razak Baginda.

Setev is seeking damages for "suffering, sorrow, as well as physical and mental anguish".

He filed the suit on behalf of his wife Altantsetseg Sanjaa and their two grandsons, Mungunsha Bayarjargal and Altanshagai Munkhtulga, who are minors.

The couple are guardians of Altantuya's children. The younger child suffers from a medical disorder which requires expensive treatment.

The suit was put on the back burner because the High Court wanted the criminal trial to be concluded first.

Razak Baginda, a close ally of Datuk Seri Najib Razak who was then the deputy prime minister, was initially charged with abetting in the murder but was later acquitted without his defence being called.

The government filed its defence saying that it could not be held vicariously liable because the two former policemen had acted on their own.

Razak Baginda, meanwhile, held the position that although he had known the victim, he denied any knowledge of the murder.

A five-man Federal Court bench chaired by Chief Justice Tun Arifin Zakaria on January 13 sentenced the two cops to death after allowing the government's appeal against the Court of Appeal's decision to acquit them.

Federal Court judge Tan Sri Suriyadi Halim Omar, who delivered the judgment, said the prosecution had proven its case beyond reasonable doubt.

Suriyadi said there was overwhelming circumstantial evidence linking the two to the crime.

Evidence in court revealed that the Mongolian woman was either murdered by C4 explosives or was killed first and the remains destroyed on October 18, 2006, in the outskirts of Shah Alam, near the capital city Kuala Lumpur.

On August 23, 2013, the Court of Appeal allowed the appeals brought by Azilah and Sirul and acquitted them.

Four years earlier, High Court judge Datuk Zaki Mohd Yassin had found the two guilty and sentenced them to death. – March 3, 2015.

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