

**May 6 Hearing Of Najib's Application Over A Defamation Suit Against Malaysiakini
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 (Bernama) -- The High Court has set May 6 to hear an application by Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Umno executive secretary Datuk Ab Rauf Yusoh to strike out paragraphs from the counter claim and statement of defence of Malaysiakini and two others over a defamation suit.

Counsel Nor Hazira Abu Haiyan, representing both Najib and Ab Rauf, told reporters that Deputy Registrar of the High Court, Norfauzani Mohd Nordin, fixed the date when the matter came up for case management.

Nor Hazira said the application was filed on Jan 28, among others, on grounds that the counter claim and defence were frivolous, vexatious and abuse of court process.

Najib and Ab Rauf are seeking to strike out more than 50 paragraphs from the counter claim and statement of defence.

The prime minister filed the suit on May 30 last year in his personal capacity, and Ab Rauf, on behalf of UMNO, against Mkini Dotcom Sdn Bhd, Malaysiakini.com editor-in-chief Steven Gan and chief editor Fathi Aris Omar.

They claimed that the defendants had reported, produced and allowed the publication on May 14 of two articles carried in the 'Yoursay' column of www.malaysiakini.com.

Najib and Ab Rauf contended that the defendants had deliberately allowed the publication of the articles despite knowing that they contained baseless accusations and untruths.

They said the defamatory words had allegedly tarnished Najib's reputation as a politician, as the UMNO president and as the prime minister.

The two plaintiffs said the comments implied sarcasm to indicate that UMNO was incompetent as a political body and as the backbone of the Barisan Nasional (BN).

They claimed that as a result of the publication of the articles, their reputation was severely tarnished when UMNO was condemned, particularly in the social media and mass media.

They are seeking aggravated, excessive, general and special damages, interests and an injunction to restrain the defendants or their assistants from publishing the articles.

The plaintiffs also want a written apology from the defendants to be published in the newspapers, and costs.

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