

Lawyer linked to sworn statement on Altantuya's murder to know fate soon
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The verdict of Tan Sri Cecil Abraham's misconduct proceedings will be announced soon and with it, the likely revelation of who ordered Malaysia's top civil lawyer to prepare the contentious sworn statement linked to the murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibuu nine years ago, sources said.

Abraham was said to be responsible for drafting the second statutory declaration (SD) read out by the late P. Balasubramaniam, a private detective who was briefly hired by political analyst Abdul Razak Baginda.

The verdict will come after Balasubramaniam's lawyer Americk Sidhu, released a statement yesterday demanding that Abraham also answer if he had received a telephone call from Datuk Johari Razak in July 2008, to prepare the contentious SD. Johari is a brother of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Yesterday, he also demanded that police question, among others, DSP Musa Safri, the then aide-de-camp of Najib who was then the deputy prime minister, carpet dealer Deepak Jaikishan who was said to be closely linked to Najib's family, Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin.

Americk had also suggested that police contact a senior investigation officer from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission by the name of Abdul Rahman Bachok who allegedly has the entire file on investigations into the circumstances under which Bala affirmed the contentious SD.

A source told The Malaysian Insider about 15 witnesses gave evidence at Abraham's proceedings, conducted by a three-man disciplinary committee of the Advocates & Solicitors Disciplinary Board.

Americk, who was also a witness in the proceedings, testified on behalf of the Bar Council, the complainant in the case.

The source said parties had presented submissions recently to the three-man disciplinary committee, which included a layman, for their deliberations.

Although proceedings are before the committee, the final decision whether to affirm or vary the finding rested with the board chaired by a retired judge.

"Abraham will know his fate soon whether the 17-member board has cleared him or affirmed the finding of the committee," another source familiar with the proceedings told The Malaysian Insider.

If the senior lawyer is found guilty, he could either be warned, suspended, fined or in the extreme case, struck off the roll.

Several lawyers and a former senior editor of Harakahdaily had appeared before the committee which began the hearing evidence in March last year.

The former editor of the PAS official organ gave evidence related to an interview with Deepak.

Sources said the editor's testimony was crucial as it was intended to corroborate the evidence of two other witnesses, both lawyers, who had appeared before the disciplinary committee earlier.

In his first SD, Balasubramaniam had incriminated Najib and several other personalities in Altantuya's murder.

Balasubramaniam's second sworn statement came a day after his first on July 3, 2008, where he withdrew his first SD, claiming he had signed it under duress.

During the interview with the editor in late 2012, which was recorded and uploaded by PAS organ on its "TVPAS" channel and on YouTube, Deepak had let slip Abraham's name when explaining his role in the second SD.

But in the 14 minutes and 39 seconds video clip, the name of the lawyer was muted out.

The crux of the disciplinary proceeding is that Abraham was said to have prepared the content of the second SD when it was public knowledge that Balasubramaniam's lawyer at that time was Americk.

Deepak had earlier admitted that he had helped to get Balasubramaniam to repudiate his first SD by finding two lawyers to draft the new statement.

Balasubramaniam died of a heart attack on March 15, 2013, weeks after returning to Malaysia from self-exile abroad.

Americk told the Malaysian Bar's annual general meeting (AGM) last year that Abraham had admitted to him that he was the one who had drafted the second statutory declaration.

He also later told reporters that the directive to Abraham came from Najib.

"I'm not interested in lodging a complaint with the board. My agenda is just to find out who instructed him to do it," Americk had said then.

Two former police commandos – Corporal Sirul Azhar Umar and Chief Inspector Azilah Hadri – who were charged with Altantuya's murder, were found guilty and sentenced to death by the Federal Court in January this year.

Razak, a confidante of Najib, was charged with abetting Azilah and Sirul but was

acquitted by the High Court in 2008 without his defence being called.

The government did not appeal his acquittal. Despite the conviction, the motive for the murder of Altantuya was never revealed.

Sirul, who is currently held at the Villawood immigration detention centre in Sydney, has claimed that he acted under orders when he murdered Altantuya.

Politicians, including former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, are now demanding that police investigate who ordered Sirul and Azilah to murder the Mongolian woman.

They said the motive for the murder was never revealed despite the case being dragged through three courts over an eight-year period.

Evidence in court revealed that Altantuya was murdered before the body was blown up by C4 explosives on October 18, 2006, on the outskirts of Shah Alam, near the capital city Kuala Lumpur. – April 7, 2015.

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