

Why raise Altantuya murder now, Najib asks critics
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Datuk Seri Najib Razak today struck back at his critics, who had repeatedly questioned his alleged links to the murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibuu nine years ago, wondering why "influential individuals" insisted on bringing up the case that the courts had dealt with.

Without naming names, the prime minister said he found it "disturbing" the issue was mentioned again, adding that if veteran leaders insisted on bringing up the issue, even in passing, it would automatically have caused it to be resurrected again.

"Such influential individuals have many resources. When the issue erupted, I believe they would still have been able to verify the validity of the allegations.

"If they believed this to be true, why did they not raise it when the issue erupted eight years ago? Why now?

"Some have said that they are only questioning the issue now as it has turned into a matter of life and death of those who have been convicted.

"But this case has been tried in the courts, with a clear verdict and punishment meted out.

"Are they disputing the very judicial system that they put in place?" he asked in the FAQ section of his NajibRazak.com website where he answered 13 hot issues that had been raised by various parties.

Last month, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad listed down in a blog posting various allegations against Najib and wrote that none had been answered adequately.

These included the murder of Altantuya and the claims made by one of her convicted murderers, former police commando Sirul Azhar Umar, who was Najib's former bodyguard.

Sirul had claim he was "under orders" to kill Altantuya, and Dr Mahathir had said such an allegation ought to be investigated because Sirul had worked for Najib.

Najib said it was "unfair" to force him to get the case investigated again especially since the judicial process had been exhausted.

"It is unfair to force me to investigate this case again and demand to know who, if anyone, had ordered the killing.

"I am not involved and do not know anything about it. The court has determined who was guilty of the murder. That should be the end of the story.

"Despite the court's lengthy deliberation and judgment, the ample time given to the appellant to have their case heard and judged, my 'sumpah laknat', the repeated denials I have made, the public explanations provided by Abdul Razak Baginda, some people continue to question the issue and keep trying to implicate me," he said.

"Sumpah laknat" is the Malay term for sworn oath recited in a mosque while political analyst Razak was Najib's confidante.

Razak was acquitted of abetting in her murder in 2006 but Sirul and Chief Inspector Azilah Hadri was found guilty by the Federal Court after a final round of appeal and was sentenced to death.

Azilah is on death row while Sirul has fled to Australia. The Malaysian authorities have applied to have him extradited.

Najib questioned why were the public listening to the issue which he said was being recycled by the opposition.

He said the people must be aware that in politics, many issues were being played up repeatedly and this was one of them.

"It became hot at a time when I was PM-in-waiting and the opposition needed a way to prevent me from advancing.

"Because the two bodyguards had worked for me, and Razak was a friend and associate, they tried to connect the dots to me.

"Razak has openly admitted to the relationship with Altantuya but in no way did I have any knowledge of it.

Pakatan (Rakyat) and their media have irresponsibly tried to play the psy-war game by trying to implicate me and influence perception," he said, adding that there was even a superimposed picture of him supposedly dining with Altantuya in a restaurant.

This was not the first time Najib had denied any involvement in the Altantuya's murder.

The latest was last month when in an interview with TV3, he denied to have anything to do with her murder.

The prime minister had said he sworn that he did not know Altantuya and was not involved in her murder directly or indirectly.

"There is no evidence at all to say I knew Altantuya. There were no photographs, no writings, no witnesses. And the police have investigated.

"This thing happened in 2008... a long time ago," he had said.

Najib had also recited the religious oath thrice, including at a mosque in Permatang Pauh in 2008, explaining he never knew Altantuya or involved in her murder.

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

It emerged during the trial that Razak, had enlisted Deputy Superintendent Musa Safri's help as he could not tolerate the harassment from Altantuya.

Musa was at the time the aide-de-camp for Najib, who was then the deputy prime minister.

On April 9, 2009, the High Court meted out the death sentence on Azilah and Sirul after a marathon 159-day trial.

On August 23, 2013, a three-man Court of Appeal bench acquitted the two policemen due to lack of evidence.

Judge Tengku Maimun Tengku Mat, who delivered the written grounds, said the two should have been freed without their defence called.

The bench ruled that the failure to call Musa proved fatal to the prosecution's case.

However, the Federal Court overturned the Court of Appeal acquittal and sentenced both Azilah and Sirul Azhar to death. – May 17, 2015.

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