

Sarawak Report to sue Rahman Dahlan, NST and others
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Sarawak Report said today that it will take legal action against an Umno minister, pro-government newspaper New Straits Times and others for the "malicious" falsehoods they have promoted to destroy its credibility.

The whistle-blower site took Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan to task for using the word "scum" on the site's founder and editor Clare Rewcastle-Brown and for labelling its research on the scandals of 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) as "blatant lies".

Sarawak Report, which played a key role in the 1MDB controversy with its exposes, also slammed Rahman for using journalist Lester Melanyi to discredit it.

"BN's so-called strategic communications chief, Abdul Rahman Dahlan, a minister for housing, has on the same grounds outrageously libelled the writer, calling her 'scum' and labelled our research as 'blatant lies'," it said in a statement today.

"Mr (Rahman) Dahlan has not produced a single shred of evidence that would lead anyone to believe the ravings of the mentally unbalanced bankrupt, Lester Melanyi. We, therefore, accuse him of criminal libel, motivated by malicious intent."

Melanyi had produced a video confession claiming that the opposition and Sarawak Report colluded to falsify documents on 1MDB in a campaign against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Rahman was referring to Melanyi's supposed "confession" video that Sarawak Report had tampered with and forged 1MDB documents. The minister then called for the site to be investigated.

This led to the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) blocking access to Sarawak Report a few days ago.

Sarawak Report also noted that its detractors have "gone too far" in their criticism against it, saying that these have been used as an excuse by Putrajaya to block the site.

"Over the past days, certain characters who claim to represent the government and their friendly media outlets have gone too far.

"They have paraded a sick and discredited individual (Melanyi), who has poured out strings of lies, which none of them have sought to check out, in order to claim this as 'proof' that our research was all 'forged'.

"This would be entertaining for being so ridiculous, given the mass of evidence that supports all we have written. But ministers have now used this character and these

ludicrous libels as an excuse to order an internet ban on Sarawak Report," it said.

Besides taking legal action, Sarawak Report said it was now consulting with lawyers with the intention of reporting Rahman to the police, adding that similar action would be taken against Umno-owned NST.

Since news broke of Melanyi's video confession, many have cast doubts over his credibility, including Sarawak senior minister Tan Sri James Masing.

In announcing Melanyi's video confession, Rahman said there was "solid evidence" as provided in a police report lodged by Ramesh Rao Krishnan Naidu, president of Pertubuhan Minda dan Sosial Prihatin, a Barisan-friendly non-governmental organisation.

In the police report, Melanyi was named as a former editor of the whistleblower site, but this was dismissed by Rewcastle-Brown who said he never worked with the London-based site.

DAP's national publicity secretary Tony Pua also said he would sue Melanyi if the latter did not retract and apologise for allegations he made against the former in the videos. – July 22, 2015.

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