

**Malaysiakini in new bid to recuse judge from hearing Najib's
defamation suit
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Malaysiakini is applying for the third time for High Court judge Datuk Wira Kamaludin Md Said to recuse himself from hearing a defamation suit filed against them by Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak and executive secretary Datuk Ab Rauf Yusoh.

Lawyer Nor Hazira Abu Haiyan, representing Najib and Ab Rauf, said the court had set August 17 to hear the application.

"The court also set the same day to hear an application by Najib and Ab Rauf to remove several paragraphs in the counter claim and defence statement filed by the defendants," she said when met after case management before Kamaludin today.

Mkini Dotcom Sdn Bhd and two others, Malaysiakini editor-in-chief Steven Gan and its chief editor Fathi Aris Omar, filed the application last June 24, seeking to recuse Kamaludin from hearing the suit on grounds of bias.

They said that Kamaludin was with the Kuala Lumpur Civil High Court and transferred to the Seremban High Court in January this year.

They said it was not normal practise, nor was there any circumstances, for a Seremban High Court judge to hear the case, which was still in case management stage with no date yet fixed for hearing.

On November 14 last year, the three defendants withdrew their application filed on June 24 to get Kamaludin, then a judicial commissioner, to recuse himself from hearing the suit.

Last June 22, High Court judge Datuk Asmabi Mohamad dismissed their second application to replace the trial judge assigned by the chief judge of Malaya to hear the defamation suit.

Najib, in his personal capacity, along with Ab Rauf filed the suit on May 30 last year, saying that Mkini, Gan and Fathi had reported, produced and allowed the publishing on May 14, of two articles titled, "A case of the PM reaping what he sows", and "How much will Najib spend to keep Terengganu?"

They said the publication of the two articles had marred their reputation and sparked allegations that Umno was incompetent as a political body and the backbone of Barisan Nasional.

They added that the defamatory words had implied that Umno was misusing power for the party's interests and that it was an undemocratic organisation. – Bernama, June 26, 2015.

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