

Isma apologises to Marina Mahathir in defamation suit
The Malaysian Insider
August 17, 2015
By V. Anbalagan

Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (Isma) today made an open apology in court for defaming social activist Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir two years ago.

In a consent judgment, Isma deputy president Aminuddin Yahya read the statement of regret before judge Datuk Noraini Abdul Rahman.

The judge, however, made no order to costs.

"I thank everyone for coming to a consent order on their own free will.

"I hope all of you will go forward from now on," the judge said.

Marina sued the Isma president and 15 committee members for linking her to the activities of the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs in the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) Process (Comango).

An emotional Marina, the eldest daughter of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was seen in tears and being consoled by family members and friends who came to provide her with moral support.

Aminuddin said Isma acknowledged Marina was a respected community leader who championed current issues locally and abroad in a transparent manner.

"Articles and pamphlets distributed to the public were not intended to paint her in a negative light.

"We regret if the publications had put her in an embarrassing situation and painted her as a mastermind (dalang) who is liberal and anti-Islam," he said.

Counsel Azad Bashir appeared for Isma.

Early last year, Marina filed the suit against Isma president Abdullah Zaik Abdul Rahman and 16 committee members for linking her to the activities of Comango.

Marina, who sits on the Sisters in Islam (SiS) board of directors, in her statement of claim, said that Isma had distributed 70,000 pamphlets titled "Among the 54 NGOs in Comango" at mosques in the Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Putrajaya, Seremban, Kota Samarahan (Sarawak), Melaka, Kuantan and Kuala Terengganu on November 8 2013.

The former chairman of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation said that Isma also posted an article titled "Isma distributes 70,000 pamphlets exposing Comango" on its website

<http://www.ismaweb.net> the same day.

She stated that the pamphlets and article implied that she was involved in Comango's activities, personally involved in its report on human rights, was the mastermind behind the non-governmental organisation and did not respect the Federal Constitution.

Marina said that on November 11, 2013 she had issued a press statement refuting the allegations, denied she was involved in said report and gave the defendants a chance to retract their accusations.

She added that on the same day, however, Isma had made a press statement through Aminuddin repeating its accusations, to which she responded two days later through the press as well.

She said the defendants had failed to retract the defamatory statements despite three letters of demand dated November 19 and 27 and December 12.

Marina said the statements had tarnished her reputation and had sought exemplary and aggravated damages, an injunction to prevent the defendants from publishing said statements again and an apology from them.

However, they refused.

Marina, represented by Rosli Dahlan, told reporters that the consent order was made after a mediation exercise.

"I am quite relieved that it is all over after a year of court battle and I am satisfied with the outcome although I did not get everything."

She said Isma, which called itself a Muslim religious group, had instead defamed her for her involvement with the NGO.

"They said I am anti-Islam when I am the only Muslim in the group."

Marina, who is a first time litigant, said she realised how one could become emotional when character and integrity were at stake.

"I was brought up in a family that emphasised good values. In Islam, defamation is much worse than murder."

Marina said devout Muslim groups must think carefully before they decide to label another person.

"I don't mind having differences in opinion, which I am entitled to, but not to slander."
– August 17, 2015.

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/isma-apologises-to-marina-mahathir-in-defamation-suit>