

After Najib, Mukhriz wants to cite deputy minister for contempt

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Mukhriz claims Deputy Transport Minister Aziz Kaprawi's press statement on July 15, tried to influence the outcome of his lawsuit against PM's press secretary.

KUALA LUMPUR: After having taken legal action against Prime Minister Najib Razak, PPBM deputy president Mukhriz Mahathir is now taking Deputy Transport Minister Aziz Kaprawi to court for making statements that may influence his on-going defamation suit against Najib's press secretary Tengku Sariffuddin Tengku Ahmad.

Mukhriz's lawyer Haniff Khatri Abdulla said that the application to obtain leave from the court to start committal proceedings against Aziz was filed today.

In his court papers, Mukhriz said that Aziz's statement, published in Sinar Harian on July 15, claimed that the deputy minister had tried to give a false impression to the public on the on-going trial and was seen interfering with the judiciary on the outcome.

High Court judge Justice Ahmad Zaidi Ibrahim, who is also hearing the lawsuit between Mukhriz and Tengku Sariffuddin, ordered Mukhriz to serve his court papers to both Najib and Aziz, although Mukhriz's bid to obtain leave from court will be heard without the presence of Najib and Aziz's lawyers.

Haniff said the court will hear Mukhriz's application to get the court's permission to initiate committal proceedings against Najib and Aziz on July 20 (Thursday).

Last Thursday, Mukhriz filed an application seeking the court's permission to cite Najib for contempt of court for allegedly trying to influence the outcome of Mukhriz's lawsuit against Tengku Sariffuddin.

He had previously issued a letter of demand to Najib on July 10, demanding the Prime Minister retract his comments before July 11, failing which Mukhriz would reserve his right to take action to protect his legal interests.

He said in the application that Najib's statement was intentionally calculated to interfere with the course of justice, despite knowing about Mukhriz's suit against Tengku Sariffuddin Ahmad.

Mukhriz, the former Kedah menteri besar, sued Tengku Sariffuddin last year over four media statements the press aide issued on April 15, 20, 23 and 26, 2015.

The press releases were titled “Prime Minister’s Press Secretary’s Statement on Donation Confirmation by Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister”, “Prime Minister’s Press Secretary’s Statement on Former DPM’s Reuters Interview”, “Mukhriz Mahathir’s Statement: Response by Prime Minister’s Press Secretary” and “Prime Minister’s Press Secretary’s Statement on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir”.

In his defence Tengku Sariffuddin said he had never defamed Mukhriz in any of his media statements which only sought to clarify issues and untruths spread about Najib.

Tengku Sariffuddin said the statements were published based on qualified privilege and without malice.

He said his media statements were made in his official capacity to prevent rumours or political allegations made against the prime minister.

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