

Spike in Tabung Haji withdrawals after Rafizi's 'negative reserves' claim

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There was a spike in withdrawals from Tabung Haji on the days when PKR vice-president Mohd Rafizi Ramli published allegations against the fund in 2016, the Kuala Lumpur Magistrates Court was told today.

Lembaga Tabung Haji chief financial officer Rozaida Omar said the fund monitors withdrawal activities every day.

"On the dates when he (Rafizi) published the articles, there was a drastic withdrawal effect, which is totally different from the same period the previous year," she said when examined by prosecutors.

Rozaida was the person who filed a police report against Rafizi over an article titled "*Analisa Kewangan Tabung Haji 2009-2015*" (Analysis of Tabung Haji finances 2009-2015) which was published on the Pandan lawmaker's Facebook page.

Rafizi is currently facing trial for criminal defamation, punishable by a two-year jail sentence, fine or both.

Rozaida told the court that Rafizi's allegation that Tabung Haji depositors could not get back their money was wrong, even if the fund's reserves were in the negative.

"We do not deny some reserves are negative, but if we take into account Section 22(3a) (of Tabung Haji Act) which also includes the market value, then the asset value of Tabung Haji is higher than the liability.

"So a negative reserve does not mean that Tabung Haji cannot afford to pay (depositors)," she said.

Meanwhile, the magistrate Umzarul An-Nur Umar today also dismissed the preliminary objection filed by Rafizi to **throw out** the case.

The magistrate said that Section 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which was invoked by Rafizi's counsel Gobind Singh Deo, could not be applied because the matter was not a private summons case.

Gobind Singh had told the court yesterday that his client questioned the validity of the trial, on the basis of the magistrate's failure to conduct an examination on the complainant's complaint under the Section 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

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