

**Sulaiman Abdullah to lead prosecution team in Najib's trial, Gopal Sri Ram DPP for 1MDB case**

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**31/08/2018**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 31 (Bernama) – Senior lawyer Datuk Sulaiman Abdullah has been appointed to lead the prosecution team in the criminal trial of former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Kuala Lumpur High Court that is scheduled to begin on Feb 12 next year, said Attorney-General Tommy Thomas.

In a media statement today, Thomas also announced the appointment of Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram, a retired Federal Court Judge, who is also a prominent lawyer, as Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor to handle the entire process of prosecution over the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) affair.

“With the twin appointments of the leading lights in the Malaysian Bar, our commitment to prosecuting those responsible for the greatest kleptocracy in the history of the world with the gravity that it deserves, and that ordinary Malaysians expect, cannot be doubted,” he said.

Thomas said Sulaiman is one of the nation’s leading barristers, having substantial experience in criminal law, including white collar crimes.

“His eloquence is unmatched, and his intellect second to none. Datuk Sulaiman has impeccable integrity, and is a principled lawyer. Datuk Sulaiman has generously agreed to waive all fees, and is content to provide his services to the nation on a “pro bono” basis,” he said.

Thomas said having been in office for nearly three months and experiencing first hand the demands of the offices of the Attorney-General and Public Prosecutor, coupled with the

varied and multitasked requirements of the chief legal officer in a reforming administration, he had come to the realisation that he could not combine these onerous commitments with the simultaneous preparation and conduct of a seven-week trial in Najib's case, fixed to commence on Feb 12, 2019 and completing on March 29, 2019.

He noted that a trial of this importance and complexity required the full-time attention of lead counsel, not just during the duration of the trial, but also in the months leading to the trial, followed by the preparation of detailed written submissions after the trial.

"Unfortunately, the demands of equally urgent and pressing matters of state do not permit me the time required to focus on this prosecution. Accordingly, in the exercise of my discretion under Section 379 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), I have appointed Datuk Haji Sulaiman Abdullah to lead the prosecution in Public Prosecutor v Najib Razak," he said.

On the 1MDB matter, Thomas said it was public knowledge that the Investigation Papers (IPs) into the numerous fraudulent deals connected to the 1MDB affair have not been submitted to Chambers by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the police, except one IP concerning Jho Low, which resulted in charges and the issue of warrants of arrest against him and his father last week.

He said upon receipt of the IPs from the investigating agencies, the Chambers was required to study them, prepare charges and prosecute the alleged accused at trials.

"In order to spearhead this entire process, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram as Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor pursuant to Section 376 (3) of the CPC. Datuk Seri Sri Ram, a retired Federal Court Judge, has returned to active practice.

He has substantial experience in criminal law matters. His strong and determined personality will no doubt enhance the investigation and prosecution in all matters pertaining to the 1MDB scandal. Datuk Seri Sri Ram has also waived his fees and will act on a "pro bono" basis," he said.

Thomas, who was appointed as the new AG on June 4, made his first appearance in court on July 4 to lead the prosecution team in Najib's case, who has been slapped with three criminal breach of trust charges and one charge on abuse of power.

When Najib was charged for the second time on Aug 8 on three money laundering charges, the prosecution team was led by Datuk Mohamad Hanafiah Zakaria, who is head of the Attorney-General's Chambers Appellate and Trial Division .

Najib's case is coming up for case management on Oct 4 before Judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali.

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