

Mohd Isa's former special political officer given RM2 million, court told

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 -- The High Court was told today that a former special political officer to Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad was given RM2 million as a token of gratitude for being the link in the sale and purchase of Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites (MPHS) in Kuching, Sarawak.

A retired army, Mohamad Jani Ismail, 58, said he knew about it from Muhammad Zahid Md Arip, himself, who told him the matter when they met before a meeting with Japanese investors at a hotel in Putrajaya on June 8, 2018.

“Before the investors from Japan arrived at about 10 pm, Muhammad Zahid said he wanted to go to the smoking area to smoke and I, who was then accompanying Dahalan Tunggal (also there to attend the meeting), went to accompany him.

“While we were smoking, I said to Muhammad Zahid that he must be rich, having been appointed the Prime Minister’s political secretary (Muhammad Zahid was then the political secretary to Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad).

“He (Muhammad Zahid) responded, saying that he had some from becoming the link in the sale and purchase of Merdeka Palace Hotel in Sarawak, where he was given RM2 million as a token of gratitude,” said Mohamad Jani when reading out his witness statement on the third day of Mohd Isa’s defence trial for corruption charges.

However, Muhammad Zahid told me Mohd Isa did not know about the RM2 million gift, added Mohamad Jani, who is the fourth defence witness.

When cross-examined by deputy public prosecutor Afzainizam Abdul Aziz whether he told Mohd Isa about it, he said, he did.

Afzainizam : At that time, Tan Sri Mohd Isa was not charged in the court yet?

Mohamad Jani : I don’t know

Mohamad Jani, who is a former boxing coach, said when he told Mohd Isa about it, the former Felda chairman did not ask him to report the matter to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

Afzainizam : I put it to you that the confession on receiving RM2 million was never made by Muhammad Zahid.

Mohamad Jani: Not right

Afzainizam : The confession is important, it should be reported to MACC.

Mohamad Jani: Disagree

He also disagreed when the prosecution put it to him that it (Muhammad Zahid's confession on receiving RM2 million) was made to save Mohd Isa.

Afzainizam : Did you make it up with an intention to put Muhammad Zahid in bad light?

Mohamad Jani : Disagree

When re-examined by Mohd Isa's lawyer, Datuk Salehuddin Saidin, on why he did not lodge a police report, Mohamad Jani said he regarded the money given to Muhammad Zahid as a token of thanks for being a link in the sale and purchase deal, and also because he (Muhammad Zahid) admitted receiving it.

Mohamad Jani said he did not if that could be regarded as corruption.

Mohd Isa is facing nine counts of dishonestly receiving gratification for himself, in cash totalling RM3,090,000 from Gegasan Abadi Properties Sdn Bhd board member Ikhwan Zaidel through Muhammad Zahid as gratification for helping to get approval for the purchase of the hotel by FICSB for RM160 million.

All the offences were allegedly committed at Level 49, Menara Felda, Platinum Park, No. 11, Persiaran KLCC near here between July 21, 2014, and Dec 11, 2015.

Each charge, framed under Section 16a(A) of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009, punishable under Section 24(1) of the same law,

provides a jail term of not exceeding 20 years and a fine of at least five times the bribe amount, or RM10,000, whichever is higher, upon conviction.

The defence close it case today after calling six witnesses and judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali set Nov 4 to hear the submission by both parties.

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