

STATEMENT TO MEDIA

Dato' Sri Najib Hj Abd Razak

18.08.2022

I wish to record my objection in the strongest of terms of this appeal proceeding today where my rights to life, liberty and right to a fair hearing is at stake and that my counsel who had tried to discharge themselves because they are not able or willing to represent me anymore are still forced by the Federal Court to sit down in at the bar table on the purport that I am being represented.

Tn Hj Hisyam has multiple times stated that he is not prepared for this appeal means that I am necessarily left with no **effective counsel or proper representation before this court in a complex appeal**. This is because he has only been appointed less than a month ago for reasons I shall state below.

Due to this, Tn Hj Hisyam and team moved to discharge himself and the team from representing me at this appeal at the Federal Court as he is unable to meaningfully contribute to my case without the Federal Court granting an adjournment of three months. However, the Federal Court refused to allow them to do so.

In the current situation, is my responsibility to explain the circumstances that have brought us here.

My previous lawyers have done a stellar job over the past four years representing me in the High Court and Court of Appeal for this case which

is why they remain my lawyers in the other trials I am facing. But notwithstanding this, I lost in both my trial and appeal to the Court of Appeal.

It is with this backdrop I felt that a fresh perspective at the case to bring in new ideas was warranted and necessary for my final appeal before this court. This involves my life, nothing less.

My initial plan was the engagement of Jonathan Laidlaw QC to come onboard with Shafee & Co. and to work together with Tan Sri Shafee and Harvey. Jonathan came with the highest of recommendations and I was confident that he would be a positive contribution to the team.

The discovery of the evidence pertaining to Justice Nazlan further necessitated a new counsel to come onboard to independently look at the allegations and to submit before this Honourable Court in the most unbiased of circumstances.

Unfortunately, the High Court rejected Jonathan's bid to come onboard as my lawyer.

With the High Court's rejection and this appeal fixed around the corner I could not run the risk of Jonathan's rejection being maintained at appeal leaving me with no additional counsel which by now I took the view was imperative to independently argue the issue regarding Justice Nazlan.

Datuk Zaid Ibrahim who had approached me some time back represented that he was able to bring in legal expertise from India through his Singaporean partner Niru Pillai.

I was then introduced to two senior counsel from India, who initially impressed me with their ideas. Ultimately, they were to do the back end work while Datuk Zaid's firm facilitate the court process. Datuk Zaid and team came with a condition that their engagement must include his firm being placed as solicitor on record and a new local counsel come onboard.

I was also convinced that this was an appropriate decision after being told that other high profile appeals in the past were granted adjournments to in the spirit of due process and to facilitate an effective representation of an accused person.

My intention was not to simply delay the court process but rather because of Jonathan Laidlaw's application was ultimately rejected less than a month before the scheduled dates - hence the need the sudden engagement of new counsel.

Any new team bringing in fresh ideas will need time. I am not ashamed to say, I was desperate, as would any litigant in my predicament.

I am now in a situation where my right to counsel and a fair hearing is illusory because I made a decision that I thought was in my best interest at the time.

In the circumstances, **I am in effect without counsel**, and I humbly exercise my right for the same to be accorded to me. I am still hopeful that the courts will still give me a fair and just trial.

End