

Let's send the Altantuya murderers to hell

Contributed by Raja Petra
Friday, 25 April 2008

Today, we shall not be talking about politics. We shall also not be talking about race or religion. Today, we shall talk about doing the human thing. Today, let's discuss how to launch a 'Justice for Altantuya: restore Malaysia's dignity' campaign. And let's send those bastards who murdered Altantuya to hell where they belong.

NO HOLDS BARRED

Raja Petra Kamarudin

I had dinner with a few friends last night and on the way to the restaurant another good friend, Din Merican, phoned to fill me in on the details of Dr Setev Shaariibuu's press conference that was held earlier that day. I listened as Din filled me in on what transpired and could not help but blurt out, 'I am a father of two daughters. I can imagine what Shaariibuu must be feeling. Fucking assholes!'

'I have three daughters,' Din responded. 'These people are animals, bloody animals. Fuck them! Fuck them!' This is what I would call 'a loss for words' -- and when you just have to say something but no words can fully describe how you feel, then 'fuck' is the only word you can use which will console you enough and make you feel you have expressed your anger and disgust in a most 'appropriate' manner.

'Hey, don't insult animals,' I replied. 'Animals are cute. I love cats, dogs and horses. These people are worse than animals. Even animals will not do something like this.'

'Even pigs can be cute,' my wife who was driving the car butted in and I repeated what she said. 'Yes, even pigs are cute. These people are not even the same level as pigs. They are lower than pigs. Melayu babi, the whole lot of them.'

I found it very difficult to hold back my tears as Din continued with his narration of what Dr Shaariibuu said at his press conference. Yes, I am a very emotional person as many may have suspected by now. But I can also be very stubborn and stiff-lipped as well when facing an adversary, as the Special Branch officers from Bukit Aman have discovered. I am what the Malays would call 'marah nyamuk, bakar kelambu'. And I would not hesitate to deny my body food and water as an act of defiance just to prove to my jailors that they may incarcerate my body but they can never own my mind or break my spirit. But hearing what Dr Shaariibuu had to say 'broke' me. Even my degil got tamed.

'Let's bring these bastards down,' I told Din. 'Let's launch a 'Justice for Altanatuya: restore Malaysia's dignity' campaign' or something like that. These assholes must be sent to hell.'

Understandably, much of the dinner conversation thereafter was focused on the Altantuya murder. What was most amusing -- not that I would classify this tragic murder as 'amusing' -- is that none at the dinner table are lawyers by profession. But all were able to skilfully 'argue their case' as any seasoned lawyer with decades of litigation experience under his or her belt can -- or maybe even better than that because not all lawyers are smart (trust me on this one). I always say you need brains to become a lawyer but you do not need to be a lawyer to have brains.

Sure, 'certified' lawyers would pooh-pooh such 'coffee shop' arguments as just that, coffee shop arguments. And have we not overheard and scoffed at many an 'expert' at the next table offering his or her legal prognosis to all and sundry who would care to listen? Yes, opinions are like assholes -- everybody has one.

But there are opinions and there are opinions -- and, just like assholes, no two are alike. So, while we value the expert opinions of our 'learned' legal eagles (yes, that is what they call each other in court even though they may be arguing -- how civil), we too have conducted our own trial by court of public opinion and we have already arrived at our verdict even while the Altantuya murder trial is halfway through and long before we can see the end of what many consider a show-trial in a kangaroo court.

Of course, we are not at liberty to say this as this may tantamount to subjudice or contempt of court or something like that

(the courts have all sorts of fancy words and phrases to throw at you when they want to send you to jail whenever you differ with their opinion). So I would never dare state that the Altantuya murder trial 'a show trial in a kangaroo court' for fear of getting sent to jail. All I am at liberty to say is that many consider the Altantuya murder trial a show-trial in a kangaroo court and leave it at that without declaring whether I too share the opinion of the majority of Malaysians (not sure whether that statement can still get me sent to jail).

Anyway, back to the dinner last night and to what all those 'self-made lawyers' who never argued even one case in court their entire life had to say. As I said, neither they nor I am a lawyer but I have attended a decade of trials and hearings since the birth of Reformasi in 1998 and my 'practical experience' has exposed me to much of what goes on in court. And all I can say is that, and I repeat, while you need brains to become a lawyer, you really do not need to be a lawyer to have brains, as my dinner friends proved last night.

It was a long dinner and much was discussed and everyone had an opinion plus, as I said, all skilfully 'argued their case'. However, to avoid this piece turning into a fifty-page thesis, which may see me getting an honorary law degree (or see me getting sent to jail), allow me to summarise how the 'case' was argued last night.

First concerns the Affidavit that Razak Baginda submitted to the court during his bail application hearing in the Shah Alam High Court. Justice Segera had initially cautioned Razak's lawyer that there was no necessity in submitting an Affidavit since it was only a bail application hearing and, anyway, bail is not allowed in murder cases. But the lawyer insisted in pursuing the matter in spite of repeated warnings from the Judge. So the Judge had no choice but to accept the Affidavit as it is the right of the accused to defend himself/herself the way he/she sees fit.

Justice Segera then read the Affidavit and remarked that, after reading it, he is even more convinced that Razak is guilty. How then to grant bail, notwithstanding the fact that bail should automatically be denied anyway in cases of murder? Justice Segera was then immediately removed from hearing the case and was replaced by a junior judicial commissioner.

Note that Justice Segera is a senior Judge and the most suited to hear this very controversial and high-profile case. Was he removed because he had prejudged the case or because he was now privy to certain information that may influence his decision or because they want to 'kill' the Affidavit?

This was the first bone of contention. Karpal Singh, who is holding a watching brief on behalf of Altantuya's family, then raised this matter during the trial and he asked the police officer on the stand as to why they did not investigate the Affidavit since much has been revealed in that document. The police officer replied that they did not investigate the Affidavit because 'tidak ada arahan dari atas' (so instructions from the top).

This further enhances the belief that there is some very damaging evidence in that Affidavit and which the government is trying to hide. The fact that the Affidavit exists and Karpal raised the matter in court and the police did not deny it -- other than explain they did not investigate it because of no instructions from the top -- convinces most that something is amiss here.

It seems the Affidavit also reveals that Altantuya was camped outside Razak's house and this caused him to panic. He then went running to Najib, and Rosmah summoned Najib's ADC, Musa Safri, and instructed him to solve Razak's problem. Musa then summoned the two police officers currently on trial. So, it appears like Razak and the two police officers are not the only ones involved. Najib, Rosmah and Musa have also been implicated in this entire thing. And why the need for the police officer to declare that he had already killed six people before this if murder was not what was on everyone's mind?

Then the Attorney-General did a very strange thing. Just before the trial started, he made a public announcement that only three people and no others are involved in the murder. This is not only strange but highly irregular as well. It is not the Attorney-General's job to determine this. This is for the court to decide. Furthermore, the trial had not even started yet so how does the Attorney-General know what is going to surface in the trial? No one has testified yet and until all the testimonies are heard who knows who else is involved and whether the three accused who on trial are even guilty or not? The Attorney-General made it appear like he knows the outcome of the trial even before the trial commenced? How not to feel that the trial is a show-trial?

The Sunday morning before the trial was supposed to start, I received a SMS that said the charges against Razak would be withdrawn. At 4.00pm, I received another SMS saying that the entire team of prosecutors will be replaced because they did not agree to drop the charges against Razak. The following morning, the new prosecutor requested a one-month postponement on the excuse that he had just that very morning been told he is taking over the case so he needs time to study the files. The judge gave them a two-week postponement. The SMS may have been inaccurate but the actions thereafter lent credence to the SMS. And this SMS was from a Deep Throat in the Attorney-General's Chambers so I am not about to just dismiss it as lies and slander.

The next point is about where Altantuya's remains were found, which was deep in the jungles. The three accused deny killing Altantuya yet the police knew exactly where to go to look for the remains. How did the police know where to

go when the three denied killing her? Did they use a bomoh? Was there an informer? No, the police just happen to know that deep in the jungles they would find Altantuya's remains without anyone having to tell them.

It makes one wonder whether the police knew where to go because it is a 'gazetted dumpsite' where all 'bumped off' people are disposed. Does this then mean that the two police officers on trial alongside Razak are police hit men whose job it is to bump people off and then get rid of their bodies at that site where they retrieved Altantuya's remains? This, of course, remains mere speculation but there is certainly cause for speculation and the evidence all seem to point to this assumption.

The whispering amongst those who walk in the corridors of power is that when they went to the 'dump site' they retrieved the remains of many others as well. Some say it was the remains of seven people and others say nine. So Altantuya was not the first. There were many others before this, almost ten judging by the remains.

This, of course, has never been made public and probably never will. So, until it is, we must assume that the 'whispering' is unfounded. But then, what about Razak's Affidavit we talked about earlier, which stated that the police officer had admitted to killing six people before this. This would then make Altantuya the seventh victim. Against this backdrop, the 'whispering' about the police retrieving the remains of seven or nine people begins to sound like very loud whispers.

Many other 'key issues' raised by my non-lawyer friends, who all argued as if they were conducting the Altantuya murder trial, were matters such as how Altantuya's immigration records could be erased from the Immigration computers, the letters Najib wrote to the Malaysian embassy supporting Altantuya's visa application, the photograph of Altantuya, Najib, Razak and Kalimullah taken during Altantuya's birthday party in the Mandarin Hotel in Singapore, and much more.

Rumour has it, and it remains just that, a rumour, is that all this 'evidence' has been given to Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Okay, maybe Abdullah is using this information to keep Najib in line -- which appears to be working seeing that he is constantly licking Abdullah's hand. But this is not about politics and should not be dealt as such. This is about the Prime Minister of Malaysia withholding crucial evidence in a murder trial. Abdullah is an accessory to murder and burying evidence that will affect the outcome of the trial and interfere in seeing justice done renders Abdullah as guilty as those currently on trial and those who also should be on trial but are not.

I really wish I could write about all the above which was discussed by those at the dinner table last night. Unfortunately, since the trial is still ongoing, I will not be able to talk about any of these matters. The best I can do is relate what those at the dinner table discussed last night and leave it at that without giving my opinion. And the above is what was discussed by those who are not lawyers and never once in their lives argued any case in court.

Of course, since all these people are not lawyers, most of what they said is based purely on logic and not on points of law. It is actually quite ridiculous that people not tutored in matters of law would attempt to dissect and analyse the Altantuya murder trial and pass judgement as if they are trained and certified lawyers. Anyway, as I said, opinions are like assholes and every one has one so we should not take too much notice of what my dinner friends said last night. Meanwhile, read what my friend, Din Merican, e-mailed to me this morning.

In ancient times, nations go to war at the slightest provocation. In the 21st century, fortunately, we are more civilised than our progenitors, although there are still exceptions. After all, we are members of the United Nations and, I am told, we subscribe to the UN Declaration on Human Rights. Yet, we in Malaysia, treat foreign nationals with total disregard for compassion and human decency. Are we a bunch of cynics? I wonder.

Take the case of the beating-up of the Indonesian karate/judo coach and the brutality towards, and extortion of, Indonesian guest workers by Rela, the murder of a Mongolian national, etc. Is the way we deal with our neighbours and other nation states? I wonder whether we are a nation of laws or a country run on the basis of the law of the jungle.

Our Prime Minister, Badawi, and his Foreign Minister (at that time Syed Hamid) did not have the courtesy to reply to the letters from their counterparts in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, seeking a fair trial and justice for the family of the late Altantuya Shaariibuu. Too busy maybe? Surely not!

It is going to be tragic for Malaysia's image if the Altantuya family cannot get justice for the brutal murder of their loved one. How can we blow to smithereens a human being, someone's loved one, and a mother to two young children, using an explosive which is only utilised in times of war to destroy bunkers, bridges and buildings? This is unheard of anywhere in the world. This case, therefore, has a lot of international implications, especially when the deed was done by 'servants' of this country.

We are being viewed as arrogant by the Indonesians, Thais, Singaporeans, as well as by many of our neighbours. Now,

we add to this list the Mongolians. How indecent and irresponsible of the PM and his Foreign Minister for not even acknowledging the receipt of letters from their Mongolian counterparts. Who are we protecting?

There is no point in Badawi trying to convince us that his Administration is keen to restore the image of the judiciary. He cannot even fix his own Police Force and the AG's Office. Frankly, Malaysians should have sent Badawi and his cohorts in BN out of office in the last general election.

The mainstream media is just hopeless in the cause of justice for Altantuya and dignity for Malaysia. Malaysians and civil society movements must now pressure the Badawi government to expose the real culprit behind this murder and bring to closure this long and costly trial. Let justice prevail and let us put an end to the culture of impunity, where the powerful and politically connected are above the Law.

As a father of six kids (of whom three are girls, including a 16-year old) and a grandfather, I feel for Dr. Setev Shaariibuu and his family. I was at the press conference on April 24 at the Office of Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim and I personally saw the agony on Dr. Shaariibuu's face.

It is time for Malaysians to push this issue and not allow the murderers who walk in the corridors of power to get away with this vile and evil deed unscathed. It is time to 'storm the Bastille'. It is time we sent these sorry excuses for human beings to hell where they deserve to be.