

Rosmah withdraws appeal to recuse judge Zaini



PUTRAJAYA: The Court of Appeal has dismissed Rosmah Mansor's appeal to recuse the judge scheduled to preside over her money laundering and tax evasion trial.

On March 1, Rosmah's defence team abandoned her appeal by filing a notice of discontinuance.

The appeal was scheduled to be heard on Friday next week.

In a letter dated March 2, the appeals court's deputy registrar Noor Firdaus Rosli informed Rosmah's solicitors, Messrs Geethan Ram, that the appeal was deemed dismissed in accordance with Rule 73 of the Rules of the Court of Appeal 1994.

Rosmah's lawyer Geethan Ram Vincent and deputy public prosecutor Poh Yin Tinn both confirmed the outcome to FMT.

The Court of Appeal was scheduled to inquire into whether it had jurisdiction to hear Rosmah's appeal and recuse Justice Zaini Mazlan from presiding over the trial.

The appeal was over a decision handed down by Zaini himself on April 25 last year dismissing Rosmah's application to recuse him from the case.

The wife of former prime minister Najib Razak did not want Zaini as her trial judge, claiming that he would be biased against her after having heard and convicted her of corruption in an earlier case involving a RM1.25 billion solar hybrid energy project.

Vincent said the appeal was discontinued since Zaini will no longer be presiding over the trial after his recent elevation to the Court of Appeal.

On Sep 1 last year, Rosmah was sentenced to 10 years' jail and a fine of RM970 million for soliciting RM187.5 million and receiving RM5 million in bribes from a company managing director. An appeal is pending before the Court of Appeal from that decision.

She is currently facing 12 money laundering charges and five counts of failure to declare her income to the Inland Revenue Board (LHDN).

She is accused of committing the offences between Dec 4, 2013 and June 8, 2017.

The trial, which is scheduled for 15 days beginning May 12, will now take place before Justice K Muniandy.