

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak Finally Jailed

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*Former Malaysian **Prime Minister Najib Razak** was finally sent to jail on August 23, more than two years after he was convicted of criminal abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering. He was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and fined RM210 million (A\$68 million).*

This conviction was for just seven of 42 charges Najib faced as a result of a major corruption scandal around the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), Malaysia’s collapsed sovereign investment wealth fund. It relates to RM42 million (A\$13.6 million) transferred into his personal account by SRC International, a company linked to 1MDB.

Najib’s wife, **Rosmah Mansor**, is also being tried for money laundering and tax evasion.

S Arutchelvan (“Arul”), deputy chairperson of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM), told *Green Left* that most Malaysians are very happy that Najib is finally in jail.

“People thought that day might never come until the chief justice dismissed Najib’s final appeal.”

Right until the end, Najib tried all sorts of delaying tactics, including an attempt by his lawyer to discharge himself at the last minute, to prevent a decision being made on Najib’s appeal.

The Federal Court appeals division unanimously rejected this ploy and found that “it would have been a travesty of justice of the highest order if any reasonable tribunal, faced with such evidence staring it in the face, were to find that the appellant is not guilty of the seven

charges preferred against him.”

These delaying tactics were “predictable and ridiculous”, said Arul.

“I think that they look more guilty now than ever because they did not make any serious attempt to fight the appeal,” Arul added after the court outlined the sloppy and contradictory arguments advanced in the appeal.

“This is huge because it is the first time an ex-PM has been jailed for corruption. Previously we have only had a chief minister [of a state government] jailed for corruption. So, for now, everyone is praising the judiciary for showing that politicians are not above the law.”

However, Arul added that there are many more corruption cases to be dealt with and some of the corrupt politicians may yet get away unpunished.

“Najib’s wife Rosmah and Zaid Hamidi, president of the former ruling party — the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) — are next in line. But another batch of UMNO politicians have escaped charges, and it seems this is because they shifted camp to the current government.”

Apart from the corruption scandals around the collapsed 1MDB sovereign investment fund there are ongoing investigations in several countries into corruption allegations around kickbacks to UMNO politicians from lucrative arms contracts entered into under Najib’s rule. These include a [RM9.20 billion](#) (A\$3 billion) deal for 11 navy combat ships.

According to an August 22 [article](#) by John Berthelesen in the *Asia Sentinel*, UMNO politicians have been taking kickbacks from military contracts well before Najib became PM in 2009, including under the rule of former PM Mahathir Mohammad. These include a notorious US\$1.2 billion deal for French Scorpene submarines — which could not operate in the shallow waters around Malaysia!

The political cover up of the Scorpene corruption scandal involved the murder of 28-year-old Mongolian woman, Altantuya Shaariibuu, who had served as a translator during the purchase of the vessels.

“Two of Najib’s bodyguards, who were convicted of the murder, signed statements saying Najib had ordered them to kill the woman because she was a spy,” according to Berthelesen.

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*Featured image: Former Prime Minister Najib Razak is now behind bars. Graphic: Susan Price.
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