

Palace says it's a private affair

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Kelantan palace has described the matter between Tengku Temenggong Tengku Muhammad Fakhry Petra and his Indonesian model wife Manohara Odelia Pinot as something private between a husband and his wife.

In its first comment on the matter, the palace said the issue should be settled in accordance with the law.

The press statement, signed by the comptroller Datuk Abdul Halim Hamad, also commented on statements made by Mohd Soberi Shafii.

"All his statements are made in his personal capacity as a friend of Tengku Temenggong Kelantan. They are not official statements from the palace or the sultan's office," Halim wrote. He, however, made no mention of a man known as Ikhsan, who had also come to the defence of the Kelantan prince.

The comptroller urged Malaysians, especially those from Kelantan, to understand that the sultan was still being treated at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore and to pray for his speedy recovery.

Indonesian newspapers and news websites have gone to town over the past few days with various allegations made by Manohara.

Soberi, in turn, has also gone to the media, including television, to defend the prince, mentioning that he was speaking as a friend of Tengku Fakhry.

Among others, he had challenged Manohara to undergo a medical test by independent doctors in any country other than Malaysia or Indonesia to prove her allegations that Tengku Fakhry had physically



Manohara Odelia Pinot waving as she arrives at her home in Jakarta last Sunday. — AFP picture

and sexually abused her during their marriage, including injecting her with tranquillisers whenever she protested his behaviour.

The 17-year-old former model claimed she made a dramatic dash to freedom from Tengku Fakhry last Sunday during the royal family's trip to Singapore to visit the Kelantan sultan.

This was vehemently denied by Soberi, who told the media that the prince allowed her to leave.

Another friend of the prince, identified as Ikhsan, told local Indonesian TV stations that Manohara's allegations of being held against her will were

lies. "The prince let her go," Ikhsan was reported as saying.

Amy Chew reports from Jakarta that Ikhsan had said in the TV interview that Tengku Fakhry would like Manohara to go for a medical check-up to prove that he had not abused her.

"He would like the medical check-up to be in a neutral country. If it is proven that the allegations are untrue, Manohara and her mother must be prepared to be sued," Ikhsan was quoted as saying.

Manohara is scheduled to undergo a medical check-up in Indonesia, but no date has been given.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was also reported in the local media as saying that the issue should be resolved.

Detik.com, a well-known Indonesian Internet news portal, posted that Susilo made the remarks after attending the Asean-South Korea summit in South Korea.

He had also asked all the parties involved to be circumspect in resolving the issue and to speak the truth.

"We must know what is and what is not a private affair," Susilo was quoted as saying, noting that the case had drawn "massive" interest in the republic.

Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Teuku Faizasyah said Singapore police had called the United States and Indonesian embassies for assistance.

"After Manohara was secured by the Singaporean police, our embassy staff in Singapore processed her documents at the hotel within four hours, from 12am to 4am, on Sunday so she could return to Indonesia immediately," he said.

The *New Paper* in Singapore yesterday reported a telephone interview with Manohara's sister, Dewi Sari Asih, 20, who told of how three unknown people — a Malaysian man, a Singaporean taxi driver and an Indonesian hotel guest where the prince and his wife were staying — had helped in the "rescue".

When Dewi arrived at the hotel with her mother, Daisy Fajarina, she said they heard the emergency alarm from the hotel lift.

"A woman and a man then came running from the lobby area towards the elevator, carrying what looked like a doctor's bag. They (the security guards) told them to go to the third floor. We tried to follow, but they stopped us."

Soon after, her mother and the police went up to the third floor, while Dewi stayed behind in the lobby.

Daisy said: "When I got up to the third floor, I saw Manohara inside the lift, sitting on the floor, crying and pressing the alarm button. She refused to get out."

Yesterday, the mysterious Malaysian came forward to identify himself at private Indonesian TV station, Trans7.

He turned out to be Datuk Kadar Shah Sulaiman, Umno Muar branch chief.

In an exclusive interview with the TV station, Kadar admitted to helping Manohara.

"After dinner, Manohara went to the toilet. When she came out, she bid goodbye to me and shook my hand and, at the same time, handed a tissue to me," Kadar said, showing viewers the tissue paper.

"On the tissue, Mano had written with eyeliner pencil, 'Datuk Kadar Shah, please help me get back to Jakarta. I am not happy or healthy'."

"I immediately called Manohara's mother. I told her, 'Drop everything and come to Singapore now.'"

After she failed to call back to inform about her arrival, Kadar said he called Daisy again to ask if she was coming.

"She told me she was doing her make-up."

Kadar's account mirrored the interview given by Dewi.

He said Singapore police told Tengku Fakhry to let Manohara go when there was a standoff near the lift.

Kadar said he also intervened and advised the prince to let his wife go.

Patrick Fiat, general manager of Royal Plaza on Scotts, declined to comment on the conflicting statements by Manohara's camp and Tengku Fakhry's friends over what transpired at the hotel.

"The matter is a private affair and Royal Plaza on Scotts is committed to honouring our guests' confidentiality, hence we are not at liberty to comment."

He also declined to confirm if, indeed, the emergency alarm on the lift had gone off.