

The Jakarta Post

Published on The Jakarta Post (<http://www.thejakartapost.com>)

Government to defend Lumintang over rights case

, The Jakarta Post , Jakarta | Wed, 03/28/2001 7:12 AM | National

JAKARTA (JP): The government will defend Ministry of Defense secretary-general Lt. Gen. Johny Lumintang, who is facing an in-absentia trial in the United States over his alleged role in East Timor rights violations.

Minister of Defense Mahfud MD said that if the U.S. court declares Johny guilty, the Indonesian government will file an appeal.

""It is a unilateral case. If the court finds him guilty then we'll fight against the verdict and file an appeal,"" Mahfud told journalists on Tuesday.

He said that Johny is facing prosecution in a civil court, not a criminal court, as the case was initiated by several non-governmental organizations in the U.S..

New York-based Representatives of the Center for Constitutional Rights and the San Francisco-based Center for Justice and Accountability, on behalf of East Timorese plaintiffs, submitted dossiers to the U.S. court in April last year over Johny's alleged role in rights violations in the former Indonesian province in 1999, when Johny was the Army's deputy chief of staff.

The Indonesian government earlier advised Johny not to meet any summons from the U.S. court, but could instead ask his lawyers to attend the court hearing.

Mahfud said the Indonesian government could not do anything except provide advice for Johny because the lawsuit was not filed by the U.S. government.

""If, after filing the appeal, we still cannot free him, the Indonesian government should be responsible for the punishment as he is still a state official,"" he said.

Separately, Minister of Foreign Affairs Alwi Shihab told *The Jakarta Post* that the government will ensure that Johny does not incur any costs from the case, and will fully support him in the case.

""We will make sure that things work out well for *pak* Johny. I have ordered our embassy in the United States to keep an eye on the trial. But, basically, we will not allow Johny to suffer any negative impact,"" Alwi said.

He underlined that, at the moment, the government cannot do anything to stop the trial as even the U.S. government could not interfere in the judicial process. **(dja)**

Copyright © 2008 The Jakarta Post - PT Bina Media Tenggara. All Rights Reserved.

Source URL: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2001/03/28/government-defend-lumintang-over-rights-case.html>