

# Harakah<sup>38</sup> editor, printer charged with sedition

Alleged offence relates to publication of article on Sukma's confession

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs: *Harakah* editor Zulkifli Sulong was charged with sedition in a sessions court today

He is alleged to have published a seditious paragraph in an article entitled *Coverage of Sukma's confession despicable and mischievous - Dr Chandra*.

He pleaded not guilty to the charge under section 4(l)(c) of the Sedition Act 1948, which carries a jail term of up to three years or a fine of RM5,000 or both upon conviction.

The article appeared in the Aug 2, 1999 issue and the paragraph read:

*It is a shame that elements in the police force, in the Attorney-General's Chambers, in the court and in the media, are prepared to be manipulated in a major conspiracy by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed and his cohorts, he said.*

The article refers to comments made by Parti Keadilan Nasional deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar.

In Petaling Jaya meanwhile, the printer of *Harakah*, Chea Lim Thye, was also charged in a sessions court with committing an act of sedition in connection with the same report in the PAS newsletter.

Chea, 62, claimed trial to the offence under section 4(l)(c) of the Act.

He is alleged to have committed at his business premises, Syarikat Prema Sdn Bhd

in Jalan 51A/243, Petaling Jaya, on Aug 2 last year.

Zulkifli, 37, of Kampung Changkat in Gombak, is alleged to have committed his offence at the *Harakah* office in Jalan Pahang Barat, Off Jalan Pahang, on or around Aug 2 last year.

He appeared calm when the charge was read out to him in a courtroom packed with friends, PAS members and reporters.

DPP Tun Abdul Majid Tun Hamzah sought bail of RM50,000 but counsel P. Uthayakumar argued that the purpose of bail is not to punish but to guarantee the attendance of the accused in court.

Judge Abdul Karim Abdul Jalil set bail at RM5,000 in one surety and fixed the trial for 10 days from May 22.

*Hamkah* managing director Datuk Hishamuddin Yahya posted bail for Zulkifli at 11.15am, accompanied by PAS Youth vice-head Salahuddin Ayub and central committee member Dr Hatta Ramli.

Outside the courthouse, Hishamuddin told reporters that the case has political overtones.

"We know it is politically motivated, but the prosecution is just doing its job," he said.

To a reporter's question on the reason for the charge against Zulkifli, Hishamuddin replied: "Maybe it is because of the success of *Harakah* in the last general election . . . it is a crackdown on *Harakah*."

Chea was also released on

bail of RM5,000 by judge Wan Arfah Wan Ibrahim, who set Jan 31 for further mention.

Chea was arrested on Jan 11 after one Mohd Tajuddin Thambi Abdul lodged a report at the Sentul police station on Aug 20 last year that the article was seditious.

DPP Shamsul Sulaiman told the court that the article alleged that the police, Attorney-General's Chambers, the court and the media were willing parties to "the biggest conspiracy planned by the Prime Minister and his aides".

He said he will apply for

the case to be heard at 10 Kuala Lumpur sessions court "because it is connected with another case which will be tried in that court".

Approached by reporters a nervous-looking Chea, who was accompanied by an employee, responded to all questions with "tak tahu".