

14/01/2000

Harakah editor, printer charged

Satwant Singh; Patrick Sennyah

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The editor and printer of Pas' official organ Harakah were charged in the Sessions Court today with publishing a seditious paragraph which casts aspersions on the system of justice.

They claimed trial and were allowed bail of RM5,000 each.

The editor, Zulkifli Sulong, 37, of Kampung Changkat, Gombak, was charged in the Sessions Court here while printer Chea Lim Thye, 62, of Overseas Union Garden, Jalan Klang Lama, was charged in the Sessions Court in Petaling Jaya.

They were charged with publishing a seditious paragraph in the article Liputan pengakuan Sukma hina dan jahat - Dr Chandra (Coverage on Sukma's confession despicable and wicked - Dr Chandra) which appeared in the Aug 2, 1999, issue.

The paragraph reads:

"Adalah memalukan bahawa elemen-elemen di dalam pasukan polis, di Pejabat Peguam Negara, mahkamah dan media bersedia diperalatkan dalam konspirasi yang terbesar yang dirancang oleh Perdana Menteri Mahathir Mohamed (sic) dan konco-konconya, ujar beliau."

("It is a shame that elements in the police force, in the Attorney-General's Chambers, the courts and the media are prepared to be subservient tools in this massive conspiracy hatched by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed (sic) and his cohorts, he said.")

The paragraph was from a statement allegedly sent to Harakah by Parti Keadilan Nasional deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar, on Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja's confession to sodomy with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Sukma is on trial, with Anwar, for allegedly sodomising Anwar's former family driver Azizan Abu Bakar.

Controversy over the paragraph surfaced at Anwar's trial last year when Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah raised the matter in court.

High Court judge Datuk Arifin Jaka issued a notice to Chandra to show cause why he should not be cited for contempt, but later set the notice aside as there was no proof that it was Chandra's statement.

The statement was apparently downloaded from the Internet. At that time, Deputy Public Prosecutor Tun Majid Tun Hamzah told the court that a police report had been lodged.

Zulkifli and Chea were charged under section 4(1)(c) of the Sedition Act 1948 which carries a maximum penalty of RM5,000 fine, three years' jail or both for a first offence.

Zulkifli was charged with publishing the paragraph at 28A, Jalan Pahang Barat, off Jalan Pahang, on or around Aug 2 last year.

Sessions judge Abdul Karim Abdul Jalil allowed bail of RM5,000 in one surety. Aimi Zaini and P. Uthayakumar represented Zulkifli.

The managing editor of Harakah, Datuk Hishamuddin Yahya, posted bail for Zulkifli whose trial was fixed for May 22 to 26.

Zulkifli has no formal journalistic training. The former student of Institut Teknologi Mara in Arau, Perlis, joined Harakah in 1987 as a reporter, later becoming Kelantan bureau chief.

Chea, who holds a printing licence under the Printing Presses and Publications Act, 1984, was charged at the Petaling Jaya Sessions Court with committing the offence at Lot 9, Jalan 51A/243 in Petaling Jaya on or around Aug 2 last year.

DPP Shamsul Sulaiman told the court he would apply to transfer Chea's

case to Kuala Lumpur for a joint trial as it involved the same subject matter.

Sessions judge Wan Afrah Wan Ibrahim fixed Jan 31 for mention and allowed bail of RM5,000 in one surety which was posted by an unidentified man who accompanied Chea to court.

(END)