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Khalid shunned because of book: Witness

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: Former *Utusan Melayu* sports editor Abdul Khalid @ Khalid Jafri Bakar Shah was shunned and condemned by the public because of his controversial book on former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the High Court was told today.

Harakah editor Zulkifli Sulong said contrary to Khalid's allegation, members of the public were not angry at the writer after reading *Harakah's* article entitled *Malaysia Sweeps 10 Oscars* on March 29 last year.

"Instead, Khalid was

looked down because of his book, which contains serious and unfair allegations against certain persons, especially Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim," he said.

During examination-in-chief by defence counsel Mohamed Hanipa Maidin, he said the defendants had no hand in ruining Khalid's reputation, as the latter had lost all his credibility when he wrote the book *50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Ibrahim Tidak Boleh Jadi PM*.

He said only persons who had any morality or credibility left in them should be able to complain that they have been defamed, and not otherwise.

Comparing Khalid's book with the one written by PAS

MP for Sik Datuk Shahnnon Ahmad, entitled *SHIT*, Zulkifli said the former contains serious and unfair allegations against individuals, and the latter is an analogy of a country controlled by a dictator.

"Prof Shahnnon likens the situation to that of our stomach, whereby the existence of 'shit' causes the other body parts to feel uncomfortable and tense," he said.

Zulkifli, 38, was called as the defence's first witness in Khalid's libel suit against him; PAS, the proprietor and publisher of *Harakah*; Syarikat Prema, the printer; Sabri Zain, the writer of the alleged defamatory article; and Muhammad Abdul Rahman Koya, the English section editor.

Khalid, 60, claims that the words in the article meant he was a common criminal and an undesirable element indulging in criminal activities.

He asserted that the article also meant that he was an illiterate, unable to read the Quran or perform his fundamental duties as a Muslim.

He is seeking damages, interest, costs and injunction to restrain the defendants from further publishing the same or similar libellous words.

The defendants deny publishing the article with the intention to defame Khalid.

Alleging that the article was just a fiction, they claim to have written it in jest, without specifically referring to anyone.

The hearing continues. n