

Get your facts right, Karpal tells Zahrain
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DAP chairperson Karpal Singh yesterday lambasted independent MP Zahrain Mohd Hashim for his "ignorance" in demanding that Karpal be called as a witness in opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's second sodomy trial.

The senior lawyer said he was "somewhat amused" by Zahrain's call, saying the former PKR stalwart did not know that Karpal was called as a witness in Anwar's first sodomy trial in 1998.

Karpal (right) admitted to calling for an investigation into allegations of sodomy against Anwar, but stressed that it was former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the then inspector-general of police Rahim Noor who in 1997 rejected the accusations against Anwar.

"Subsequently, the then attorney-general, Mohtar Abdullah, publicly stated that the allegations were baseless and that no action was intended to be taken in the matter," he said in a three-page statement.

"However, after Anwar's dismissal on Sept 2, 1998, as deputy prime minister and finance minister, he was arrested and charged with the offence of sodomy against Azizan Abu Bakar. He was jointly tried with Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja for an offence of sodomy against Azizan."

Pointing out Zahrain's ignorance, Karpal said he had in fact been subpoenaed to appear as a prosecution witness during Anwar's first sodomy trial, but was later taken off the list of witnesses after he was invited and agreed to join Anwar's defence team.

'Zahrain should think before speaking'

"There was no objection by Mohtar Abdullah, who led the prosecution team, to my joining Anwar's defence team. In fact, Mohtar indicated to me that he would not be calling me a witness in the trial," he said, adding that the Federal Court had freed Anwar of the sodomy charge and set aside his six-year jail term and two strokes of the rotan.

Following the Federal Court's decision on Sept 2, 2004, clearing Anwar of the charge, Karpal said he could not see how he could give any material evidence in Anwar's second sodomy trial.

"I would advise Zahrain in future to be sure of his facts before making public statements. He should think before speaking and not do the reverse," Karpal said.

On Monday, Zahrain posted an entry on his blog, zahrain-mp.blogspot.com, urging attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail to call Karpal as a witness following the opposition veteran's admission that he had once urged the government to investigate the sodomy allegation against Anwar.

Zahrain said the admission made Karpal an important witness as he "possesses important information about Anwar's alleged acts".

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