

**Saifuddin: Dr M never gave Anwar a chance**  
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad never gave his then-deputy and now opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim a chance to defend himself prior to the Permatang Pauh MP's sacking from Umno, BN and all governmental and party posts, claimed PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution.

"I followed Anwar to the 38th floor of PWRC for the supreme council meet. He was never given a chance to answer the charges. Mahathir began the meeting by saying that he wanted Anwar sacked from the party," he recounted at a press conference in Parliament today.

He related how Mahathir then brushed aside any opposition to that stated intent and bludgeoned Anwar's sacking through the council.

Saifuddin (left) said this in defence of the party de facto leader heavily criticised in the former premier's recently published memoirs. The barrage is one of many launched against Mahathir's memoirs, titled 'A Doctor in the House', for what many are saying is his skewed depiction of history.

"In his book he also said that former IGP Hanif Omar had warned him of Anwar's wrongdoings in the early 1990s," said Saifuddin.

Training his sights on Mahathir's allegations that the IGP informed him of Anwar's involvement in dubious activities, Saifuddin said that if that was indeed true, how was it that Anwar could pass Bukit Aman's security checks prior to being appointed a minister.

"Everyone who is slated for a high government post must go through a personality clearance, administered by Bukit Aman. If Hanif had evidence against Anwar then, how could Anwar have managed to be a minister, the education minister and then the deputy prime minister?" he asked.

Saifuddin also questioned Hanif's credibility as a source of information, recounting how as a Muslim he failed to find a line in the holy Quran forbidding gambling, something that should be common knowledge for all Muslims.

The Machang parliamentarian also brought up the recent indictments against former ministers Chan Kong Choy and Ling Liong Sik for allegedly cheating the cabinet and the premier.

"PMs can be cheated, even the cabinet. So the possibility exists that Hanif may have cheated Mahathir by giving false information about Anwar," contends Saifuddin.

The PKR leader also questioned Mahathir's reluctance to testify before the courts during Anwar's first trial. He said that the then-premier was too scared that the truth may come out.

**'A total lie'**

In an immediate reaction, Pasir Mas parliamentarian Ibrahim Ali in turn refuted Saifuddin's claims, calling the secretary-general a liar.

"That (Saifuddin's allegations) is a total lie. Saifuddin was not at the Umno supreme council meeting on Sept 4, 1998, he was not a supreme council member. So he cannot have known what went on, let alone challenge Mahathir's version of the events.

"I was there, as I was a member of the Umno supreme council. And I can confirm events as Mahathir related them was the truth," Ibrahim told reporters in Parliament today.

Ibrahim (right) argued that contrary to Saifuddin's accusations, Anwar indeed had the opportunity to defend himself, emotionally thumping his fists on the table twice, and failed to prove his defence to the supreme council's satisfaction.

He also challenged both Anwar and Saifuddin to take Mahathir to court if they really disputed the details in his memoirs.

"Take him to court, if they dare. Let truth prevail!" concluded Ibrahim.

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