

'Umno-EC links': Cops probe PKR's Saifuddin
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PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution is under police investigation for defaming Election Commission deputy chief Wan Ahmad Wan Omar by alleging that he was an Umno member.

According to PKR legal bureau head Latheefa Koya, Saifuddin is being investigated under Section 500 of the Penal Code for criminal defamation.

If convicted, Saifuddin faces a maximum two years jail sentence, a fine or both.

Saifuddin was informed of the charge this morning when he was present at the Putrajaya district police headquarters to have his statements recorded.

Latheefa, who accompanied Saifuddin to the police station as his counsel, claimed that the authorities are trying to persecute him.

"This is again a waste of precious time and resources of the government machinery to persecute opposition leaders.

"Wan Ahmad could have sued Saifuddin if he had wanted to," said Latheefa when contacted.

On April 26, Malay tabloid Sinar Harian carried a front-page report quoting Saifuddin making the allegations against Wan Ahmad and EC chief Abdul Aziz Yusof.

'No probing questions'

While Abdul Aziz had denied the claim, Wan Ahmad conceded he was indeed an Umno member only to deny it six days later.

Wan Ahmad lodged a police report against Saifuddin in May.

Latheefa added that it was strange for Abdul Aziz not to have lodged a police report against Saifuddin as well.

According to Latheefa, the police had asked Saifuddin where the interview took place, whether he knew the reporter, whether he had made any defamatory statements and whether he had proof of his allegations, among others.

"The line of questioning consist of things that are obvious. There was no need to drag him all the way to Putrajaya. Maybe could have gotten info from reporter himself.

"So there was no real probing questions... Saifuddin exercised his right of silence and will answer the court if he is charged," said Latheefa.

She added that the police should be out fighting crime instead of initiating such investigations while Wan Ahmad should look to the civil court for a remedy if he felt aggrieved by the news report.

Latheefa, a veteran human rights lawyer, also said that Section 500 of the Penal Code was draconian and should be done away with.

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