

## **5 Pakatan leaders, activists charged with sedition**

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**By Ram Anand**

PKR vice-president Tian Chua, Anything But Umno (ABU) chief Haris Ibrahim, PAS' Tamrin Ghafar, veteran activist Hishamuddin Rais and student activist Safwan Anang were today charged with allegedly uttering seditious remarks.

Safwan (right), Tian Chua, Haris and Tamrin earlier today claimed trial to the charge at the KL Sessions Court.

They were charged under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act 1948.

However, Rais, for whom an arrest warrant was issued yesterday on a similar matter, surrendered himself in front of the court house and was later separately charged at the same court.

He also pleaded not guilty to a similar charge.

All five are alleged to have committed the offence at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH), between 8.55pm to 11.15pm on May 13.

Their statements were accused of being inflammatory in propagating a change in government by illegal means.

This is in relation to remarks made during a forum held at KLSCAH, and similar to a charge faced by student activist Adam Adli Abdul Halim (left) recently.

During the forum, several speakers had urged to people to take to the streets to express unhappiness over an allegedly skewed electoral process

Although all were allowed today bail, set at RM5,000 each, Safwan refused it as a sign "protest" and is being remanded at the Sungai Buloh prison.

Judge Norsharidah Awang set the next hearing for July 2.

Lawyer: Charge pure fiction

Lawyers for first four accused have expressed their intention to apply to strike out

the charges, either at the same court or at the High Court.

Counsel N Surendran, who represented his fellow party vice-president Tian Chua, said that the government's decision to prosecute the four smacks of selective persecution.

NONE "We will fight this up until the Federal Court," he said, while adding that the allegedly seditious statements made by the four are not actually seditious in nature.

"This is pure fiction spun by the government," he added.

Haris was represented by a group of lawyers led by DAP's Gobind Singh Deo, while lawyer Ariff Azam and team represented both Safwan whereas Tamrin and Hishamuddin (right) was represented by counsel Murni Hidayah.

Meanwhile, Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia, the pro-opposition student movement, have vowed to hold a vigil outside the Sungai Buloh prison tonight and every night thereafter until Safwan changes his mind and decides to allow bail to be posted.

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