

'Surendran targeted for defending Anwar'

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Padang Serai MP N Surendran is being targeted for prosecution because of his defence work as PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's lawyer and is not "just another sedition case", Surendran's lawyer Eric Paulsen claims.

Paulsen said this was because Surendran's allegedly seditious comments in both of his sedition charges were in line with arguments already made in court as part of Anwar's defence in the Sodomy II trial.

"Whatever he is saying now is in line with Anwar's defence, which have been taken up in the High Court and in the Court of Appeal..

"In the Federal Court, when the matter comes up, he will still be arguing the same thing. Slapping the two sedition charges, is for us, a clear-cut case of targeting the lawyers who are representing Anwar Ibrahim.

"Of course, it will have a very serious impact on the defence of Anwar Ibrahim," Paulsen told Malaysiakini when contacted after Surendran was charged in a sessions court in Kuala Lumpur earlier today.

The charge is Surendran's second sedition charge this month, this time over a YouTube video in which he implicated Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak (right) in pressing the sodomy charge against Anwar.

On Aug 19, Surendran had been charged with sedition for releasing a press statement on April 14, which also deals with Anwar's Sodomy II charge

Surendran claimed trial to both charges. The bail for the first charge was set at RM5,000, while the bail for the second charge was RM4,000.

According a transcript provided to the court as part of the charges, Surendran had claimed that the Sodomy II charges were a ploy to jail the opposition leader.

"We hold Najib personally responsible. Without his knowledge, without his condoning it, this cannot happen and we again reiterate Najib drop the conspiracy and the charges against Anwar immediately, okay?"

"Don't threaten Malaysian democracy by trying to jail the parliamentary opposition leader of Malaysia," he allegedly said at the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya on Aug 8, between 2pm to 4pm.

Surendran also allegedly criticised Najib “for going all over the world pretending to be a world statesman” even as Anwar is being prosecuted.

According to Paulsen, Surendran spoke in the video after case management for Anwar’s appeal to the Federal Court.

'Sedition offence'

The charge sheet stated Surendran’s that alleged statements in the YouTube video is an offence under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act 1948.

Upon conviction, he faces a fine up to RM5,000 or jail up to three years or both for the first offence, and jail up to five years for subsequent offences.

For the fresh charges, the prosecution team against Surendran is led by deputy public prosecutor Wan Shaharuddin Wan Ladin, while his defence team is led by Oh Cheong Ghee.

Paulsen, who was present in court as part of the defence team, told Malaysiakini that Wan Shaharuddin had asked for the bail to be set at RM8,000.

However, he said Oh argued that there is no reason for Surendran to abscond the court proceedings because of his standing as a member of parliament and as a long-time lawyer. He asked for Surendran to be released on either a personal bond, or the minimum sum of RM2,000.

“The judge (Ahmad Bache) agreed because of his background, so the judge said that RM4,000 would be a just sum,” he said.