

Why always Anwar, asks veteran Aussie ex-judge
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Elizabeth Evatt is Australia's first woman Federal Court judge and the 81-year-old legal eagle is in Malaysia to observe Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy appeal.

However, she is puzzled as to why the sodomy law seems to be mainly applied on the opposition leader.

Speaking to reporters at the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya, Evatt said she noticed that not many people are charged with sodomy in Malaysia and most of the cases involved Anwar.

She also described the sodomy law as discriminatory and a violation of human rights.

"This is a relic of the British legal system which even it (Britain) had abolished," she said.

Asked whether she observed any interference with regard to the proceedings, Evatt said there had been no such incidents thus far.

"I guess we will have to wait for the outcome," she added.

Meanwhile, another international observer Danthong Breen said if the issues raised during the appeal have created reasonable doubt, then it warranted an acquittal.

"If doubt has been proven, that is enough to get an acquittal," added the International Federation of Human Rights representative.

The two are among five international observers present at the Federal Court.

The others are International Bar Association's Grainne Mellon, Centre for International Law's Harry Roque, Centrist Asia Pacific Democracy International's Fernando Penan and Interparliamentary Union, Lawasia and Australian Law Council, which is represented by Mark Trowell.

The Court of Appeal had overturned the March 7 High Court's decision and convicted Anwar of sodomising his former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

The appellate court also sentenced him to five years imprisonment.

Anwar has always maintained that the sodomy charge was fabricated by his political rivals, but the government has denied this.

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