

Rafizi: My duty to speak for the voiceless
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Rafizi Ramli

COMMENT I am thankful to my team of lawyers, headed by Gobind, Saiful Izham and Ahmad Nizam, and assisted by young lawyers Haijan, Adi, Nik Zarith, Joanne, Falihin and Ashraf.

They worked with lawyers Ranjit Singh, Razlan Hadri, Siaw Sun and Michelle, along with another team of lawyers, William Leong and Halim.

These three groups handled all 12 cases against me, while I performed my duties as an elected representative.

They did so since 2012 without taking a single sen in legal fees. I could not have been so vocal if not for these lawyers, who deserve due recognition from society.

The verdict is to be expected. The three-year sentence for both the cases matched my expectations.

I am confident in my legal team and believe that I have a good chance of winning the appeal case at the High Court. I have asked Gobind, Saiful Izham and Ahmad Nizam, along with the young lawyers, to file an appeal at the High Court as soon as possible.

Even so, I am no political greenhorn. I know I have to be realistic about the likelihood of being jailed and that it can happen in just a few months from now.

I have planned everything so my wife, son and parents can live as best as they can in my short absence. I appreciate the outpouring of concern, but I also urge that the three of us, my wife, our son and I, are allowed privacy in the next few months so we can live our lives like a normal family.

I have never prayed not to go to jail. Instead, I prayed that Allah help me accept today's verdict, whatever it may be, and everything else to come as He had planned.

I am calm and not angry, nor am I afraid or sad, because I know I have fulfilled my obligation as a citizen, an opposition leader and an elected representative.

I never find myself in a dilemma when making decisions, because I know that people's welfare and hardship take priority over political expediency.

It is for this reason that my decisions as an elected representative or politician may anger or threaten other leaders, be it in BN or in my own party.

I remind myself when I go to work every morning that our every action and deeds are

measured not by seemingly powerful politicians, but angels who would not miss a single beat.

So there is no need to fear or worry about the views of those in power, or be too calculative in our decisions as a leader. It is wrong to be calculative when faced with issues that are clearly right and clearly wrong - this too will be recorded by the angels

So today's verdict to jail me was expected and does not change a single thing. I will continue to be vocal inside and outside the party.

I will continue to conduct exposes and check every single sen that was spent by the Najib Abdul Razak administration, to the best of my ability.

Tomorrow, my Pakatan Harapan MP colleagues Tony Pua, Wong Chen, Dr Hatta Ramli, Ong Kian Ming and I will continue to expose discrepancies in the East Coast Rail Link project now being implemented by Najib.

I will also respond on issues regarding Tabung Haji and present new analyses on the fund's finances.

Besides Tabung Haji, my focus will be on higher education and the National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN), our pensions fund, discrepancies between salaries of high and low ranking civil servants, the abolition of the goods and services tax and so on.

Starting tomorrow, I will be speaking at rallies with other leaders and activists who want Najib to step down. The first ceramah, themed #LawanTetapLawan will be in Pandan, at Dewan Kampung Cheras Baru.

On Wednesday, I will be at the Royal Malaysian Navy base in Lumut to meet with the navy retirees who first alerted me of the late payment of pension gratuities. That night, I will speak at a rally in Lumut with other Pakatan Harapan leaders.

Starting next week, I will be travelling to each state to focus on seats where BN won marginally, to ensure that I can campaign at each state and marginal seat by end of January 2017.

In each state, I will spend the days recruiting and training volunteers and the nights shaking up the marginal seats with new exposes through the #LawanTetapLawan ceramah series.

I have long been ready for the situation that I am in and I have prepared everything that needs to be done to fight the Najib administration.

Those who feel I was stupid for defending the army retirees must know that I did so not for political support or positions. We must speak for those who can't speak for themselves.

Those who are angry or sympathise with me, don't just show your anger on Facebook and Twitter. Show how you are tired of Najib by volunteering with Invoke, the group I have

trained myself, and join the thousands of volunteers who will ensure that Najib will lose all the marginal seats held by Umno/BN today.

Go to www.invokemalaysia.org to register as a volunteer or contribute financially to #ProjekBuangNajib (Project to Oust Najib) which I am working on.

Najib may feel he is invincible against MPs like me, but he will feel defeated if faced with tens of thousands of trained volunteers who are ordinary citizens.

Lastly, I understand that I have only a few months before I am given mandatory rest. I hope Najib realises that he, too, may only have a few months as prime minister if the rakyat's anger escalates further.

Let's meet in Pandan and the other destinations after this.

#LawanTetapLawan

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