I was defending judiciary with Anwar roadshow, Shafee says
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Senior lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah told the Court of Appeal today the reason why he held talks and gave interviews after PKR *de facto* leader Anwar Ibrahim's 2015 sodomy conviction was to protect the judiciary.

This came about, Shafee said, after "attacks" on the judiciary at the time from Anwar, as well as former presidents of the Malaysian Bar, Christopher Leong and Ambiga Sreenevasan.

He cited Anwar's (*photo*) statement form the dock during the latter's sentencing, where the opposition leader **criticised** the judiciary, and was not stopped by his lawyer Gopal Sri Ram.

The senior lawyer also pointed to a statement released by Leong a day after the decision to maintain Anwar's five-year sentence, titled "Prosecution or persecution," which he termed "reckless."

"I hit the ceiling when I saw the statement, which to me is contemptuous, done without care and reckless," Shafee said, adding that Ambiga's remarks several days after the decision were similarly "contemptuous."

"I see all this as the worst contempt of court, but no action was taken against Anwar, Leong or Ambiga," he told the appellate court.

Shafee is representing himself in his appeal over his defamation suit against senior lawyer Tommy Thomas, former Court of Appeal judge VC George, the Malaysian Bar, and Leong, over wanting to table a motion against him for holding roadshows.

His suit had been **dismissed** by Justice Hanipah Farikullah in 2016.

Besides the roadshows, Shafee also gave interviews to the *New Straits Times* and *Utusan Malaysia*, which he said were in response to Leong and Ambiga's remarks.

"Being the prosecutor in the case, I felt there was a need to protect the judiciary," he said.

"Since 1988, where I almost got arrested along with Ambiga (*photo*), I have always defended the judiciary.

"I was even prepared to debate with Sri Ram over the question of Chief Justice Md Raus Sharif's appointment as an additional judge, but the debate had to be called off at the last minute," he said, adding that was his nature.

Shafee also stated that he found it odd that members of the Bar were the ones attacking the judiciary.

This was why, he added, that he agreed to participate in an Umno-organised talk in Kelana Jaya a week after the Federal Court's decision to uphold Anwar's sentence.

‘Nipple pinching’

Shafee also defended his claim at the Kelana Jaya talk that Anwar had pinched the nipple of complainant Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, saying that it was based on the **testimony** of a doctor from Hospital Kuala Lumpur.

Justice David Wong Dak Wah, who was leading the Court of Appeal bench, cautioned Shafee that this was a defamation appeal, and that such matters he should only be brought up in other proceedings.

The others in the panel were Justice Umi Kalthum Abdul Majid and Justice Ahmadi Asnawi.

"Is all this necessary, as the issue before us is on defamation.

“We are not here to say whether or not your conduct is unprofessional,” Justice Wong said, referring to a separate probe on Shafee for misconduct. "We are here to deal with the defamation issue.”

But Shafee argued that he had to contextualise what was claimed, with the judge responding by saying that his explanation could be prejudicial.

Malaysiakini had previously **approached** Shafee on his apparent embellishment of Saiful Bukhari’s in-camera evidence with the “pinching” detail. He later **dismissed** the report as “*merapu*” (rubbish).

The Umno-linked lawyer also told the court today that there are times when one has to provide further explanation, after the judge asked him to stick to what was related in the Court of Appeal and Federal Court judgments.

"But this is my interpretation of the judgments,' Shafee said.

Ambiga, who appeared for Thomas, said there was no evidence to suggest Saiful Bukhari’s in-camera evidence could be revealed.

But Shafee claimed the evidence was read out by Sri Ram and the late DAP leader Karpal Singh in open court.

Justice Wong said the court would reserve in delivering its judgment in the case.

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