

BBC axes Raja Petra from 'HARDtalk'
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In a disappointing blow to fugitive blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin and his many fans, the HARDtalk interview with the controversial public figure was axed on the advice of BBC lawyers.

NONEHARDtalk is a no-nonsense news show that prides itself on no-holds-barred interviews with controversial news makers on global and local issues.

Notable Malaysians who have made it to the show's line-up included former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his arch-nemesis, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

According to a posting on Raja Petra's website MalaysiaToday yesterday, the show's producer Bridget Osborne said that the BBC was advised by its lawyers not to proceed with the programme as it may expose the broadcaster to legal action.

MalaysiaToday reported that Osborne feared that issues the interview was to touch on was deemed to be very sensitive in nature and may cast the Malaysian government in a very bad light, hence opening the unsavoury but very real possibility of a legal confrontation with the Malaysian government.

NONEThe portal's article on the matter claimed that "RPK is too hot even for HARDtalk".

It is very rare for the relatively independent BBC to axe a programme, especially for HARDtalk, which was positioned as a hard-hitting news programme.

Osborne added that the fact that HARDtalk is also accessible to Malaysians is one of the factors that make it a problem for the BBC.

Malaysiakini's attempts to contact Osborne about the matter have been unsuccessful.

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