

'If consensual, why charge me only?'
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Beh Lih Yi

PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim questioned why he was the only one brought to court if he supposedly had 'consensual' unnatural sex with his former aide.

"If it is consensual, why was I the only one being charged? This is a political persecution," he told reporters upon his release on personal bond after being charged with sodomy at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions' Court this morning.

Anwar was charged with having committed sodomy with Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan under Section 377B of the Penal Code on June 26 between 3.01pm and 4.30pm at Unit 11-5-1 Desa Damansara Condo in Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur.

According to Anwar's lawyers, Section 377B refers to consensual sex, not assault.

the charge against anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation trial 070808The former deputy premier was initially expected to be charged under section 377C which reads "committing carnal intercourse against the order of nature without consent".

Deputy public prosecutor Hanafiah Zakaria however told the media that the interpretation of section 377B is open on whether the offence was done with or without consent as the provision is silent on the word 'consent'.

Although Saiful appeared to be equally culpable under the law, Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar said he would not be charged because he had lodged the complaint.

"You have to make a choice. Do we charge the person who lodged a police report claiming that the act had taken place?" he said, according to the state Bernama news agency.

PM under fire again

Anwar also continued his scathing attacks on Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for pursuing the sodomy charge.

"This is dirty politics of a man who is losing support and very soon will lose power," he said.

Yesterday, Anwar called Abdullah a "man under siege" and allegedly orchestrating the "sham trial" against him to deflect attention away from the latter. The premier has denied the allegation.

"The charge is meant to embarrass me, nothing else, but I am not embarrassed," stressed Anwar, who also described the case has been handled in a "haphazard" manner.

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 13The opposition politician said he was "impressed" with judge SM Komathy Suppiah's "firmness" in granting him a bond, allowing him to personally campaign at the Permatang Pauh by-election.

The PKR leader, who will run as a candidate, will now be able to submit his nomination paper

in person on Aug 16. Polling has been fixed for Aug 26.

With a temporary respite from the case until it is mentioned in court on Sept 10, he also noted that he would now concentrate on his election campaign.

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 15 "I am very much looking forward to the by-election campaign," said the former deputy prime minister.

He is scheduled to address supporters at a ceramah to be held in Taman Medan, Petaling Jaya tonight and slated to return to Permatang Pauh on the weekend.

A commotion broke out outside the courtroom when Anwar addressd the horde of journalists as video crew and photographers jostling for position to take his picture.

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