

US: We are paying close attention
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 7, 2008
S Pathmawathy

The United States and 'many other friends' of Malaysia are paying close attention to the sodomy case involving opposition stalwart and PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim.
MCPX

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 17A brief statement from the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur, read: "It is our hope that the rule of law will be applied fairly and transparently, given the flawed nature of the process that led to Anwar's past sodomy conviction, which was ultimately overturned by a Malaysian court."

"Transparent and impartial application of the law in this case is critical to continued confidence in Malaysia's democratic institutions, particularly its legal and judicial systems," it added.

This morning, Anwar was charged at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court for committing carnal intercourse against the order of nature. He was freed on a personal bond.

On June 28, Anwar's former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan filed a police report claiming that the opposition leader had sodomised him.

Greeted by hundreds of supporters

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 13Hundreds of PKR supporters cheered and chanted 'reformasi' when Anwar emerged from the court complex earlier.

About 500 followers and hundreds of media representatives had been gathering at the entrance of the court compound, with some coming as early as 6am.

Anwar arrived at the entrance gate around 9.40am and was greeted with 'reformasi' chants. In tow were Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and the former's lawyer Sankara Nair.

Before heading to the courtroom, Lim read out a joint statement by members of the opposition alliance Pakatan Rakyat. It outlined that they rejected the allegations against Anwar.

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 12It also stated that if Anwar was detained, his wife and PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail will be lead coordinator for Pakatan Rakyat.

The statement also stressed that all Pakatan parties will work towards Anwar's victory in the Aug 26 Permatang Pauh by-election and upon winning he will be declared the country's opposition leader.

As Anwar prepared to leave the court building later, he was once again mobbed by reporters and supporters.

Wan Azizah accompanied her husband, who was smiling and waving to those assembled as he walked out of the court lobby enveloped by party stalwarts and police officers.

Popularity will double

PKR supreme council member Irene Fernandez, who sat throughout the proceeding, expressed joy that Anwar was free pending trial.

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 irene fernandez "I think they can't find the evidence and the element of force (involved), so they have now moved the charge to consensual (sex)," she said.

"Yes we will fight and I think his (Anwar) popularity will double.

"For us the real battle is in Permatang Pauh. This is only a distraction. There is nothing they can do than attack on morality (grounds). But now the people become the judge," she added.

PKR member KG Segar was convinced that the charge against Anwar was 'false and baseless'.

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 sara lily "The accusations are baseless...they (the police) still haven't given our lawyer the police report," he said, adding that it was also unnecessary for the police to mount so many roadblocks.

Another PKR member, G Sara Lily, also believes that the charge against the opposition leader was trumped up.

"It is all lies...we go to their (Anwar and Wan Azizah's) home often and I have never seen him act wrongly. Many young boys and girls go to their home (but) no one has ever made such accusations.

"I never believed it at all. It's all just lies concocted by the government," she added.

The joint Pakatan statement is as follows:

The Pakatan Rakyat leadership council held a special meeting last night. We reached the following agreements:

a) We consider that the case against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is blatant political persecution, and that it is not only Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is being tried but the whole nation is on trial.

anwar ibrahim sodomy allegation saiful bukhari azlan first day in court 070808 anwar b) In case Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is detained or denied bail, then Wan Azizah, the PKR president, will run as coordinator for the council.

c) We fully endorse Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the Pakatan Rakyat candidate in the by-election and we will form a joint machinery to give him our fullest support.

d) We agree that when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim succeeds to enter parliament, he will be proposed to be the opposition leader effective Aug 27.