

Tian Chua and Gobalakrishnan among 17 acquitted
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KUALA LUMPUR – Batu MP Tian Chua and Padang Serai MP N. Gobalakrishnan were among 17 people acquitted by the Sessions Court here from participating in an illegal rally organised by Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih) on Nov 10, 2007.

Sessions Court judge Jagjit Singh Bant Singh also acquitted PAS Central Committee member Mohamad Sabu, Mohd Zad Abdullah, Mohd Salim Yeslam, Abdul Razali Abdul Rahman, Razali Abdul, Mohd Asri Ahmad, Mohd Harith Fathillah, Saleh Mohd Tahir, Azahar Yusop, Sulaiman Ahmad, Taib Abdullah, Mohd Shafie Ismail, Mohd Nazreen Mohd Nasir, Mohd Abi Salam Ariffin and Ishak Othman.

Jagjit said the prosecution had failed to prove a prima facie case against the 17 people, aged between 19 and 60, who were accused of participating in an illegal assembly.

In acquitting Chua and Mohamad who were accused of gathering near the Istana Negara, Jagjit said police had allowed the duo to hand over a memorandum to the palace officials and accusations were made based on visual recorded on tape.

"The two were at Istana Negara to submit the memorandum and the police had given them time. After submitting the memorandum they had left the vicinity, so the question of they did not disperse when asked to, does not arise," he said.

As for the charge on Gobalakrishnan who was arrested with several others on Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the judge said the court found the evidence of the arresting officers unsatisfactory and doubted their credibility.

"There is no evidence to show if they were in the assembly, or if they had just arrived at the place or if they just happened to be there," said Jagjit in a Bernama report.

Jagjit also ruled that the arrests made at the national mosque were also not justified as those accused had every right to be there since it was a place of worship for Muslims.

All the accused were represented by Mohamad Hanipa Maidin, Jason Tay and Nasir Khan while Deputy Public Prosecutors Ishak Mohd Yusoff and Mohd Farizul Hassan Bakri appeared for the prosecution.

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