

**Anwar Files Defence, Counter-Claim Over Hishammuddin's Suit**  
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KUALA LUMPUR -- Anwar Ibrahim has filed his defence and counter-claim over Home Minister Hishammuddin Tun Hussein's suit against him, in connection with a sex video featuring someone resembling the opposition leader, claiming for various damages.

He filed the statement of claim and counter-claim on May 16, which was served to Hishammuddin, two days later.

In his statement of defence, Anwar said the words uttered by him during an interview with the media on March 22 - after lodging a report on the video with the Dang Wangi police - were published on an occasion of qualified privilege.

He contended that the words were published in the reasonable protection of his own legitimate interest as Opposition leader and member of parliament for Permatang Pauh, to the public who had a corresponding interest in receiving the information.

Furthermore, he claimed, the said words were fair comment on a matter of public interest in expressing his opinion that the criminal acts of the men called 'Trio', in displaying the video, were being tolerated by Hishammuddin even though the minister knew or ought to have known of their (Trio) criminal acts.

In his counter-claim, Anwar contended that Hishammuddin's words in his press conference on March 21, gave weight to the assertion by the 'Trio' that it was him (Anwar) in the sex video.

"Although the plaintiff (Hishammuddin) and the news report, reporting his comments, did not mention the defendant's (Anwar) name, it was evident from his comments that the reference was to the defendant," he said.

Anwar contended that Hishammuddin had defamed him in a manner calculated to disparage him in his capacity as the Opposition Leader which resulted in his personal and professional reputation being gravely injured, putting him into public scandal and odium.

He is seeking damages for slander, aggravated and exemplary damages, interest, costs, and other relief deemed fit by the court.

On April 26, Hishammuddin filed a defamation suit against Anwar for uttering defamatory words against him during an interview with the media on March 22 after lodging a report on the video with the Dang Wangi police here.

Hishammuddin, 50, said the words were widely reported in the media and the Internet and were understood to mean that he was responsible for screening the video to a group of editors and journalists at Carcosa Seri Negara Hotel last March 21.

The minister said the words were also understood to mean that he arranged for the screening of the video and plotted with the prime minister and the police top brass to have it done.

High Court Judicial Commissioner Vazeer Alam Mydin Meera set June 3 for case

management.

He set the date after meeting counsel Cecil Abraham representing Hishammuddin, and J. Leela and K. Shanmuga for Anwar, when the case came up for mention.

Abraham told the media that he would file Hishammuddin's reply to Anwar's defence by June 1.

**(Bernama)**

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