

**Anwar Freed, Court Rules No Corroborative Evidence**  
**Bernama**  
**January 9, 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was on Monday freed from a charge of sodomising his former aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, after the High Court ruled that there was no corroborative evidence to support Mohd Saiful's testimony and his DNA analysis.

Justice Datuk Mohamad Zabidin Mohd Diah in his verdict said that at the end of the defence case, the court was reluctant to convict the accused (Anwar) based solely on uncorroborated evidence of Mohd Saiful.

"After going through the evidence, the court could not be 100 per cent certain, that the integrity of the DNA samples collected from SP1 (Mohd Saiful) are not compromised," said the judge who took about three minutes reading out his judgment in a packed courtroom.

Justice Mohamad Zabidin also said it was not safe for the court to rely only on DNA evidence in coming to the decision.

"Therefore the accused is acquitted and discharged," the judge concluded.

Anwar then hugged his wife Datin Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and children.

Among those present in court were Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang and former Information Minister Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir.

Commenting on the ruling, Anwar said: "Thank God, Alhamdulillah, I feel vindicated. Now we have to focus on the next general election".

He added he was "a little surprised and a little relief" over the ruling.

Meanwhile, Solicitor-General II Datuk Mohamed Yusof Zainal Abiden told reporters that the prosecution would discuss the judgment before deciding on whether to appeal the decision.

"We have 14 days to file our notice of appeal," said Mohamed Yusof, who led the prosecution.

Meanwhile, Anwar's lead counsel Karpal Singh described the ruling as a right decision which was meted out according to the law.

"This is the verdict which we have been hoping for and Anwar deserved to be freed," Karpal said, describing the trial which lasted over three years as a truly challenging period in his career as a lawyer.

Anwar, 64, had been charged with sodomising Mohd Saiful, 26, at a Condominium Desa Damansara unit in Bukit Damansara here, between 3.10pm and 4.30pm on June 26, 2008.

He had been charged under Section 377B of the Penal Code which carries a sentence of up

to 20 years' jail and whipping, upon conviction.

In May last year, Anwar was ordered to enter his defence after Justice Mohamad Zabidin ruled at the end of the prosecution's case that Mohd Saiful was a truthful and credible witness.

Anwar had opted to give his evidence from the dock which spared him from being cross-examined by the prosecution, while Mohd Saiful had chosen to take the stand under oath.

This was the second sodomy charge faced by Anwar.

On Aug 8, 2000, he was convicted and sentenced to nine years' jail after being found guilty by the High Court of sodomising driver Azizan Abu Bakar.

However, four years later, he was freed after the Federal Court, in a 2-1 majority decision, overturned the conviction and set aside the jail sentence.

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