

Civil society applauds decision
TheSunDaily
January 10, 2012
by Hemananthani Sivanandam and Radzi Razak

KUALA LUMPUR (Jan 9, 2102): The Malaysian Bar today applauded the acquittal of Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on a charge of sodomy, saying the decision accorded with evidence presented in the case.

Bar Council president Lim Chee Wee in a statement today said the two-year proceedings highlighted many flaws in the case such as the lack of full disclosure of evidence, unreliable DNA evidence and certain 'unusual findings' that complicates things.

"The trial judge made an unprecedented finding at the end of the prosecution's case that the complainant was a truthful and credible witness, without the benefit of having heard the defence," Lim said.

Anwar, 64 was acquitted of charges of sodomising his former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan at a Damansara Heights condominium in June 2008.

The Bar's sentiment is shared by the NGO Human Right Watch (HRW) whereby HRW Asia deputy director Phil Robertson claimed the prosecution had refused to turn in key evidences as required by the Malaysian criminal procedure code.

These include its witness list and witness statements, notes by the doctors who examined Saiful at Kuala Lumpur Hospital, pharmacists' worksheets and notes on DNA testing and analysis, and closed-circuit television recordings from the condominium guardhouse where the alleged sodomy took place.

Chairman of Asli Centre for Public Policy Studies Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam in a statement said the verdict showed that the legislature has strengthened its integrity and independence.

"This has set the signal for more rapid transformation towards a more democratic and progressive nation.

"All fair-minded rakyat will rejoice at this wise and momentous Malaysian Court decision which would reflect well on the government under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the Chief Justice(Tan Sri Arifin Zakaria) for not only promoting but actually practising justice and fairness," said Ramon.

People's Welfare Party (Kita) president Datuk Zaid Ibrahim said it was a historic moment as many did not think the court would acquit Anwar.

"The fact he got acquittal shows we have hope on our judiciary system. It is also a victory for Anwar and the Opposition because they have shown strong growth," he said.

He added that political leaders now will focus on nation building issues instead of personalities.

Copyright © 2012 Sun Media Corporation Sdn. Bhd. All rights reserved.

Source: <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/261723>

