

DPM: Appeal of Anwar acquittal up to prosecutors
The Malaysian Insider
January 12, 2012
By Lisa J. Ariffin

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 12 — Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today said it was up to the Attorney-General's office to decide if an appeal against Monday's High Court decision to acquit Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim of sodomy was merited.

"We will leave it to the prosecutors to consider fully whether it's in public interest. The prosecutors will appeal or otherwise," Muhyiddin told reporters today at a press conference here.

"For us, in the executive, we will not comment further and will leave it to the prosecutors to consider fully as the time to appeal is two weeks and there is still time," he added.

Yesterday, Azlan Mohd Lazim, the father of Anwar's accuser Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, pleaded with the Attorney-General to appeal the opposition leader's acquittal.

Solicitor-General II Datuk Mohd Yusof Zainal Abiden, who was lead prosecutor in the trial, told TV3 last night that he would recommend a review of the decision.

He added that prosecutors would first apply for the written judgment to undergo a review of the grounds before proceeding with any appeal.

Today, Muhyiddin said Azlan's plea was "the voice of a father who wants his son to get enough [litigation]."

"It is not against the legal process and is a normal thing. When someone is acquitted in a case and another wants [further litigation,] there is an appeal process," he added.

When asked to comment on Bar Council president Lim Chee Wee, who had disagreed with the family and said the High Court had ruled fairly in the case, Muhyiddin said "this is their opinion".

Asked further if this meant the Bar Council was siding the opposition, Muhyiddin briefly said, "normally that's the case".

On Monday, the High Court acquitted Anwar of a charge of sodomising former male aide Saiful.

Judge Mohd Zabidin Mohd Diah ruled that the prosecution had not done enough to prove Anwar had committed sodomy against Saiful.

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