

Harussani: I asked Dr M not to sack Anwar
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By Syed Mu'az Syed Putra

SHAH ALAM, Aug 24 — Tan Sri Harussani Zakaria today revealed he had attempted to meet Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed 13 years ago to advise him against sacking then deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He also wanted to ask Dr Mahathir not charge the current Pakatan Rakyat (PR) defacto leader for sodomy.

The Perak Mufti said he was concerned back then that Anwar's sacking would bring about split Malays, and that he had repeatedly cautioned the former prime minister to think about an alternative solution.

"I have told Dr Mahathir to stop (to not do it) but there are three things he would not stop. The first was to sack Anwar. (When that was about to happen), I was barred from meeting the prime minister.

"I said sacking Anwar will not have a small effect it can split the Malays...when he (Dr Mahathir) wanted to charge Anwar for sodomy, I said even I you wanted to sack Anwar do it through a Cabinet reshuffle. Put him in another ministry," Harussani said today during a religious forum here.

He was charged with sodomy and corruption in 1998 after he was sacked from the Cabinet and was later convicted and jailed for both offences. The Federal Court however overturned his sodomy conviction in 2004 after finding contradictions in the prosecution's case.

Anwar is currently facing a second sodomy charge, where he is charged with sodomising former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan. He faces up to 20 years in jail if convicted under section 377B of the Penal Code,

Harussani stressed that Dr Mahathir's actions in sacking Anwar had effectively split Malays.

"I said that if you sack Anwar you divide the Malays, I also said don't charge for sodomy...I said if there are no witnesses there would be dire consequences," added the Perak mufti.

Also present at the forum was PAS information chief Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man and Umno ulama Fathul Bari Mat Jahya. The forum was chaired by ex-Perlis mufti Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin.

Harussani also commented on the current controversy surrounding the Selangor Islamic department's (Jais) recent raid on a church, and said that it was compulsory for Muslims to defend their faith, as it is an offence for non-Muslims to proselytise to Muslims.

"We have to wage a jihad... if there is no jihad we are done for," he added.

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