

**Anwar agrees to discrimination against gays to protect sanctity of marriage**  
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**By Lisa J. Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 18 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim agreed at a High Court hearing today that homosexuals should be discriminated against to protect the sanctity of marriage, but pointed out that archaic laws should be reviewed to prevent innocent people from being punished.

Anwar was testifying today in his defamation suit against Umno-owned newspaper Utusan Malaysia, which had in January accused the opposition leader of being a gay rights proponent, claiming he said so during a BBC interview early this year.

Utusan had previously quoted Anwar (picture) as saying during the interview that laws on gay rights in Malaysia were considered "archaic" and "not relevant" when asked whether he was prepared to push for the idea of anti-discrimination as far as gay rights were concerned.

To defence lawyer Datuk Firoz Hussein's question of "Should we discriminate against homosexuals?", Anwar answered: "Yes".

"We don't give space to homosexuals and uphold the sanctity of marriage," he said, adding the law must be "crafted in a way we must believe the sanctity of marriage between a man and woman".

"We do not promote homosexuality," he added.

However, he insisted archaic laws against homosexuals have to be reviewed "so innocent people will not be punished".

"To use this sort of legislation to punish innocent people should not be condoned or tolerated".

Asked why he considered existing laws against unnatural sex under Section 377 of the Penal Code to be "archaic", Anwar said "because it is hardly used and only used for political reasons".

"It is used without enough proof, it is used not because of respect of law but only for politics," he said.

"So it needs to be reviewed... To have witnesses and enough evidence before being brought to court," he added.

The Permatang Pauh MP then said "Generally in PR (Pakatan Rakyat), we agree on the review and total reform of laws in the country".

Earlier this year, Anwar was acquitted of a charge of sodomising former male aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, with the High Court ruling that the prosecution had not done enough to prove Anwar had committed sodomy against Saiful.

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