

**Saiful's dad retracts apology to Anwar, now says Sodomy II not a plot**  
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**By Md Izwan**

KAJANG, May 1 — Azlan Mohd Lazim has now retracted his apology to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, saying today his son Saiful Bukhari's sodomy complaint against the opposition leader was not a plot.

In comments that may affect the May 5 polls, he added that "certain quarters" had influenced him to apologise to Anwar and say it was a political conspiracy in a closed-door press conference last March 8.

"Today, I retract my apology to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and stress that my son's sodomy case is true.

"It isn't a political conspiracy," he told a press conference at a hotel here, adding he will now quit PKR.

Azlan's retraction comes just four days before polling for the 13th general election, but the 60-year-old said the timing was a mere coincidence and that he had not been coerced by any party.

"I step forward to make the statement voluntarily and am not forced.

"I also was not offered any reward to retract my apology," he said.

Azlan, who was alone at the hastily-convened news conference, said he realised he had made a mistake and added that his action was bereft of reward.

"After evaluating and rethinking, I admit I made a mistake for apologising to Datuk Seri Anwar.

"I have realised and want to apologise to my whole family especially my son Saiful," he said, adding that Saiful was aware of today's news conference and that both father and son had no quarrel with each other.

Azlan said he did not fear being labelled a liar or any negative backlash as a result of his reversal today, adding that people were free to draw their own conclusions.

"It's up to the people; I don't mind," he said.

He also said he will serve written notice of his resignation to PKR soon.

On March 8, Azlan had declared that the opposition leader's second sodomy charge was an "evil political conspiracy" planned by a special officer in the Prime Minister's Department involving Saiful that was engineered to tarnish Anwar's image.

At the heavily-guarded press conference called by PKR's Johari Abdul, Azlan had publicly apologised to Anwar and the latter's family over the incident, admitting the episode had put them through much pain and suffering.

Johari, a PKR supreme council member, told The Malaysian Insider today that Azlan may have come under pressure from Umno prompting the latter to make a complete 360-degree turn on.

"Maybe he's under pressure, from Umno and also his family, that's why he made the decision to retract.

"His statement will not have any impact, the people can judge for themselves whether he speaks the truth or not," said Johari, playing down any potential backlash from Azlan's statement today.

"Such people can change their stand every time, it's up to him," added the Sungai Petani MP incumbent who will be defending his federal seat on Sunday.

Anwar declined comment when approached at an event in Selayang today.

The 65-year-old PKR advisor was acquitted of sodomising Mohd Saiful, then 27, by the High Court on January 9, 2012 and escaped spending potentially the next 20 years in jail, which would have killed off his political career and his dream of taking Putrajaya for good.

The veteran politician, who is defending his Permatang Pauh federal seat in the May 5 polls, had sued Mohd Saiful for wrongfully accusing him of sodomy, but later withdrew the suit, saying his reputation had been vindicated by the acquittal.

The public prosecutor has appealed against Anwar's acquittal and hearing has been set for July 22.

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