

**Tian Chua, Four Opposition Activists Charged For Sedition  
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 29 (Bernama) -- Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) vice-president Tian Chua and four other opposition activists were Wednesday charged in the Sessions Court here for making a seditious speech at a ceramah at the Chinese Assembly Hall two weeks ago.

However, Tian Chua or his real name Chua Tian Chang, 50, together with the chairman of the Malaysian Undergraduates Solidarity, Muhammad Safwan Anang @ Talib, 24, PAS member Mohd Tamrin Abdul Ghafar, 63, and opposition activist Haris Fathillah Mohamed Ibrahim, 54, pleaded not guilty when the charge was read before Judge Norsharidah Awang.

According to the charge, all of them were accused of making speeches at a ceramah by uttering seditious words to encourage the people to change the government which had been formed according to the law, by illegal means.

They were alleged to have committed the offence at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall at Number 1, Jalan Maharajalela, Dang Wangi here between 8.55pm and 11.15pm, on May 13.

All the accused were charged under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act 1948 (Act 15) and punishable under Section 4(1) of the same act which carries a maximum fine of RM5,000 or up to five years' imprisonment, upon conviction.

Judge Norsharidah allowed bail of RM5,000 with one surety for each of the accused and fixed July for mention.

Earlier, Deputy Public Prosecutor Mohamad Abazafree Mohd Abbas had offered bail of RM5,000 with one surety for each of the accused.

Counsel Gobind Sing Deo, who represented Haris, did not object to the bail and this was supported by lawyer N.Surendran, for Tian Chua, and lawyer Ariff Azami Hussein, representing Muhammad Safwan and Mohd Tamrin.

Meanwhile, Surendran, who represented the defence team, informed the court that they would be filing an application to the High Court to dismiss the charge on grounds that the charges faced by all the accused were baseless and an abuse of the court's power.

Surendran also told the court that Tian Chua's mobile phone had been confiscated by the police after his detention on May 23 under the Sedition Act.

The court then ordered the mobile phone to be returned to the owner.

The proceedings were also attended by family members of the accused besides several opposition leaders such as PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar and PAS vice-president, Salahuddin Ayub.

One hour later, another opposition activist Hishamuddin Md Rais pleaded not guilty in the same court on a similar charge.

Hishamuddin, 62, was charged with committing the offence at the same time and place.

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