

Malaysia in international doghouse after sodomy verdict, says DAP
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Malaysia is once again in the international doghouse, following the Federal Court's decision yesterday to sentence Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to prison, DAP said today.

Veteran leader Lim Kit Siang said the red flags raised by foreign countries over the verdict was a terrible start for Malaysia this year as a member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council and chairman of Asean.

"The decision was not just a dishonour to Anwar's service, but also to "Malaysia's international reputation as well as Vision 2020 for Malaysia to join the ranks of developed nations in five years' time," said Lim in a statement today.

"Thanks to the Federal Court on Anwar's appeal yesterday, Malaysia is again in the international doghouse over the rule of law, democracy and human rights – no more terrible start this year for Malaysia with the double responsibility as member of the UN Security Council and Chairman of Asean.

"The United States, United Kingdom, Canadian and Australian governments, the European Union (EU) as well as international press and human right bodies have all raised the red flag about Malaysia's descent to a 'rogue' state," said Lim.

He said even the Singapore Business Times wrote in an editorial that "public confidence in the judiciary has slipped to the point that few were shocked with yesterday's outcome".

He added that the government's statement insisting the judiciary was independent, issued immediately after the verdict was announced, had backfired on Putrajaya.

"In fact, the unprecedented (sic) statement from the Prime Minister's Office, minutes after Chief Justice Tun Ariffin Zakaria announced the court's unanimous rejection of Anwar's appeal, but before the sentencing had been announced, only escalated national and international doubts about whether there is true independence of the judiciary and just rule of law," said Lim.

He added that the Malaysian Bar President Christopher Leong had said that the case was filled with glaring anomalies, including the failure to charge the complainant, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, for sodomy, and that the charge against Anwar was based on a provision in the Penal Code that was rarely used.

"With Anwar's five-year jail sentence, he will be 72 years before he is released and he will be disqualified from holding an elective office for another five years after release, unless the Umno/Barisan Nasional government is toppled in the 14th General Election," said Lim.

He said the battle for justice, freedom and human dignity, which Anwar had dedicated his whole life to, must "burn stronger in the hearts and souls of all Malaysians until such injustices and abuses are nightmares of the past".

He said the greatest tribute they could pay to Anwar was to reaffirm the two fundamental principles of Pakatan Rakyat (PR): the common policy framework and the spirit of consensus among the three parties.

"It will lead the PR from strength to strength – what our political opponents in Umno/BN fear most and are trying their utmost to destroy PR integrity and viability by the destruction of these two fundamental PR principles."

The Federal Court yesterday found Anwar guilty of sodomising his former aide Saiful in a condominium unit at Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur, on June 26, 2008.

Anwar was handed a five-year jail term.

In the summary of his judgment, Arifin found that claims of political conspiracy by the defence team remained an unsubstantiated allegation.

He also agreed with the High Court and Court of Appeal that Saiful was a credible witness.

Several countries, including the US, the UK, European Union, Canada and Australia, had expressed concerns about the Federal Court's verdict.

They said that Anwar's case raises questions about the independence and fairness of Malaysia's judiciary, and the country's rule of law.

The High Commission of Canada said it was also concerned about selective prosecution under the Sedition Act in the country. – February 11, 2015.

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