

High legal fees forced me to drop suit, says Saiful
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By V. Anbalagan

Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan, who withdrew his RM50 million defamation suit against former opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said he abandoned his action because he could no longer afford the legal fees.

"I had a good case, but the legal process is long and winding and I cannot afford it," he said in a statement issued to the media through his lawyer, Zambri Idrus.

Saiful, who is married with a child now, said he would have had to mortgage his property if he proceeded with the suit.

"It has been seven years that I have been going up and down to the courts to prove the authenticity of my police report," said Saiful, who is said to be employed as an insurance agent.

Saiful said he did not want interested parties to exploit his civil case if the matter went to trial.

However, he said he stood by his police report against Anwar in which he said his former employer had sodomised him.

Earlier this morning, High Court judge Azizul Azmi Adnan struck out the suit during case management after Zambri said that his client was withdrawing the action.

The judge had previously fixed the trial to begin on August 10.

Saiful earlier amended his plea that the court should find Anwar liable and award him (Saiful) damages as the former opposition leader had been convicted for sodomy.

However, Anwar took steps to block that move, with the position that his conviction for sexual misconduct could not be relied upon in a civil action, said lawyer Latheefa Koya.

In the criminal case, the Federal Court on February 10 upheld the Court of Appeal's decision in April last year that Anwar was guilty of sodomising Saiful, and sentenced him to five years in jail.

On June 23 last year, Saiful, 30, filed for damages, citing physical trauma and agony since 2008 as a result of being sodomised by Anwar.

In his statement of claim, Saiful said Anwar had accused him of defaming and conspiring against him with his police report alleging sodomy.

Saiful also said he had not lied in the police report about being sodomised by Anwar,

and that the last sodomy incident had taken place at Unit 1151, Desa Damansara Condominium, Jalan Setia Kasih in Kuala Lumpur in 2008.

The former aide said he was looked down on by the community who believed Anwar's allegations against him, adding that he was also ridiculed on social media.

Anwar in his defence denied sodomising Saiful and said the allegations were false, adding that his former aide had no reasonable cause of action and that the defamation suit was frivolous, vexatious and an abuse of the court process. – June 1, 2015

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