

Saiful drops defamation suit against Anwar
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In a surprise turn of events, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan has withdrawn his RM50 million defamation suit against former opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is now serving jail time for sodomising his one-time aide.

Lawyer Latheefa Koya, who appeared for Anwar together with Shahid Adli Kamaruddin, said the matter was conveyed by Saiful's counsel Zamri Idrus to High Court judge Azizul Azmi Adnan today during case management.

"No reason was given for the withdrawal. The judge then struck out the suit," she said.

Latheefa said the fact Saiful withdrew action was further affirmation of Anwar's innocence over charges of sodomy against the former aide in 2008.

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

Saiful had 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 Latheefa.

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.

Anwar said that in a civil case, the burden of proof rested with Saiful and he relied on the defence of fair comment, absolute and qualified privilege to contest the suit. – June 1, 2015.

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