

Anwar Fails In Suit Against Anifah
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Former opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today failed in his defamation suit filed against Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman on his statement at a media conference in Washington in 2009.

The High Court dismissed the suit after finding that he had failed to establish his claim and ordered him to pay costs of RM20,000.

Via a written judgement draft, Judicial Commissioner Siti Khadijah SH Badjenid said Anifah's statement on Anwar was made outside Malaysia and under Section 23(1)(a) of the Courts of Judicature Act 1964, the civil jurisdiction of the High Court is for action arising in the country only.

"The High Court in the country has no authority over cases whose cause of action arose outside of Malaysia," he said.

Anwar filed the suit against Anifah on May 27, 2009 by claiming the minister's statement at the media conference, when United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was present, had tarnished his image.

Anwar accused Anifah of portraying him as someone who was not qualified to hold any political or other posts, and dangerous to the Malaysian society.

The statement was then published via the website of the United States Department of States on May 14, 2009 and two days later (May 16, 2009), The Star newspaper had published an article titled 'Anwar offered me the DPM post', based on Anifah's statement in the same media conference.

Siti Khadijah also said the defendant (Anifah) had made a warning statement that what he mentioned was "just for the information of the audience here" which showed that Anifah did not mean for his statement to be published in Malaysia.

"In the view of the court, the statement of warning cannot be said to be as an afterthought as it had been clearly mentioned at the media conference and it could not be disputed by the plaintiff (Anwar).

"There would have been no need for the defendant to make such a warning as he did if the statement was made in a closed door situation. From the information available, the tendency was more towards showing the court that the defendant did not mean for the statement to be aired in Malaysia," said Siti Khadijah.

Anwar had previously applied for RM100 million in damages, claiming that the statements of Anifah, which was widely reported in the local and foreign media, has damaged his

character and directly or indirectly portrayed him as unethical, unprincipled and corrupt.

Anwar was represented by lawyer Razlan Hadri Zulkifli while counsel Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah represented Anifah.

Meanwhile, Anwar who was also present at the proceedings today, appeared nonchalant after listening to the judgement. Escorted by several prison wardens, he met family members and opposition leaders after the proceedings ended.

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