

## Anwar Ibrahim's lawyers challenge sodomy charge

Charges of sodomy against Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim cannot stand, his lawyers have told the court hearing the politically sensitive case.

Counsel R. Sivarasa, arguing for Ibrahim's application to quash the sodomy charge, said medical reports do not suggest any penetration, the 'main and core ingredient of the alleged offence' for which medical evidence was required beyond reasonable doubt.

'In this case, medical reports show without a doubt that penetration was non-existent. This, in itself, is sufficient for the court to quash the charge as it is clear that no offence has been committed,' Sivarasa, an ethnic Indian lawyer, was quoted as telling the court by The Star.

Ibrahim, 62, was charged with sodomising his 24-year-old personal aide Mohammed Saiful Bukhari Azlan June 26 last year. He dismissed the charge as politically motivated.

This is the second sodomy charge Ibrahim is facing in a decade. The one in 1998 led to his dismissal as the country's deputy prime minister and several years of imprisonment.

Sivarasa submitted that the prosecution had malicious intent and was not impartial as Attorney-General Abdul Gani Patail, who Anwar alleged had fabricated evidence in his 1998 'black-eye incident', was still involved in the sodomy trial.

Ibrahim made a political comeback in March last year, leading an opposition alliance that wrested 88 seats in parliament and control of four of the 13 states.

However, he has failed to carry out his threat of capturing power at the national level for which he had set specific dates last year.

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