

LAWASIA DISCOURAGED BY ANWAR TRIAL OUTCOME

LAWASIA, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific was profoundly discouraged to learn the final outcome of the case against Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Malaysia, with the Federal Court overturning the 2012 High Court decision to acquit Anwar on charges of sodomy, and sentencing him to 5 years imprisonment.

It has noted and endorses the views of Malaysian Bar Council, which give rise to justifiable concern over the use of Sections 377A and 377B of the Penal Code to prosecute Anwar.

It records its concern at the anomalies that the Malaysian Bar highlights in the prosecution and eventual conviction of Anwar.

As an organisation that promotes human rights within the region, LAWASIA also observes that laws that criminalise sodomy are considered as wholly contrary to rights afforded under the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and other human rights law.

It is of ongoing concern to the regional legal community that Malaysia's lawmakers appear reluctant to repeal colonial relic laws that are widely considered to be in breach of universally accepted human rights law.

Apprehension deepens when the use of such laws in Malaysia appears to be selective in the extreme. A prevailing international view that Malaysia's *Sedition Act* is among such laws further calls into question whether the pursuit of justice motivates prosecutions under them, or whether relic laws and the justice system are being used as a tool to stifle legitimate opposition.

LAWASIA fears for Malaysia's standing in the international community where the actions of its legal institutions in such circumstances attract widespread concern of victimisation. It notes the unease that has been expressed by governments, legal communities and respected human rights organisations in reaction to Anwar's conviction and to other instances of perceived persecution.

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President

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