



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

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Malaysia: ICJ Welcomes Ruling in Anwar Appeal

The International Commission of Jurists welcomed Malaysia's highest court ruling yesterday overturning former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy conviction and sentence of nine years imprisonment and setting him free. "The Federal Court's ruling is a step in the right direction in upholding the rule of law," said ICJ Secretary-General Nicholas Howen. "Basic standards of fair trial were not followed in the first and second trials and Anwar should have been acquitted long ago", Nicholas Howen said.

In a 2-1 ruling, Malaysia's Federal Court decided to overturn Anwar's previous conviction and found that the High Court had misdirected itself. The Court also found that the prosecution's key witness was unreliable and in effect involved in the facts that gave rise to the charge.

"Finally justice has been done," said ICJ Vice-President Dato' Param Kumaraswamy, who observed the handing down of the judgment on behalf of the ICJ. "Since 1988, under the Mahathir regime, the Judiciary did not have the courage to dispense justice independently", he added.

Anwar Ibrahim was jailed for six years for corruption in 1999. One year later he was sentenced to further nine years for sodomy. He always argued that the charges against him were politically motivated after former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed sacked him.

"The Malaysian Government should now take steps to bring the country's human rights record into line with international standards", said the ICJ Secretary-General. "I encourage the Government to ratify and implement core international human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights", added Nicholas Howen.

The ICJ has monitored Anwar Ibrahim's trial since its initial stages. Earlier this year, the International Commission of Jurists, the Australian Bar Association, the Bar Council of Malaysia, the International Bar Association, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and LAWASIA monitored the appellate proceedings at the Federal Court.

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The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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