

20 SEP 1998

Anwar-Detain

POLICE DETAIN ANWAR, SAY LAWYERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- Sacked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was detained by police at his house tonight, according to his lawyers.

Anwar was seen taken out by police officers from his house at Bukit Damansara here and driven off in a van.

His lawyers Zainur Zakaria and Christopher Fernando told reporters that Anwar was expected to face charges of sexual indecency.

Yesterday, his adopted brother and a former speechwriter pleaded guilty in court to being sodomised by Anwar.

Anwar was seen holding one of his six children before being taken out of the house without handcuff to the shouts of "Reformasi" (reform) by thousands of supporters.

Hours earlier he addressed huge crowds of supporters at the National Mosque and sections of the crowd later made their way to the home of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad but were dispersed by anti-riot police.

Another of his lawyer, Pawancheek Marican, said Anwar was arrested under Section 377D of the Penal Code relating to sodomy.

Anwar also spoke to his supporters.

" Anwar's lawyers are dismayed over the way he was arrested as we have written to the Attorney-General that they be informed if Anwar were to be arrested as they can bring Anwar (to the police)," Pawancheek said.

Police arrived at Anwar's residence at 9 pm.

Pawancheek said Anwar was given an hour to pack his clothes and see his children, family and later to have dinner.

" I've no idea where Anwar was taken but the police did say that Anwar will be charged tomorrow," he said.

Pawancheek said that so far he had no idea at which court Anwar would be charged.

" That's why three more of Anwar's lawyers -- Christopher Fernando, Zainur Zakaria and Sulaiman Abdullah -- followed him to get further information.

" The supporters are now waiting for the lawyers to return here to get whatever information. In the meantime, they have been advised not to create trouble," he said.

Pawancheek also said Negeri Sembilan Umno Youth chief Ruslan Kassim, who is a staunch Anwar supporter, was detained earlier.

Anwar was sacked on Sept 2 on allegations ranging from sexual misconduct to leaking state secrets but has repeatedly denied the allegations, saying he is the victim of a conspiracy to oust him.

Since then, he has been holding almost daily protests attended by thousands of supporters in several parts of the country calling for political reform, making "reformasi" his battle cry.

Earlier today, he took his fight to the National Mosque here where he addressed huge crowds and again called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir to step down.

The crowds later spilled over to the nearby Merdeka Square but their march towards the prime minister's official residence at Jalan Damansara was blocked by anti-riot police who used water cannons and tear gas to disperse them.

The drama later shifted to Anwar's house, where thousands of supporters

had gathered, until news of his arrest was confirmed by his lawyers.

Late tonight, Anwar's wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, emerged from the house and addressed the waiting supporters.

" I'm glad my husband was arrested as a hero," she said.

Dr Wan Azizah said she and her family members were taken together with Anwar in a van by police but later her husband was transferred to another vehicle.

She said she and several lawyers followed the vehicle to the Bukit Aman federal police headquarters.

She confirmed that Anwar is being held at Bukit Aman for questioning but she and the lawyers were not allowed to meet him.

" While in Bukit Aman, Datuk Jamil Johari (Police director of management) met and assured me that police will act professionally and that Anwar will be taken care of," she said.

Dr Wan Azizah said she begged for justice for her husband.

According to her, at a public rally in Batu Pahat on Saturday night Anwar had sworn in the name of Allah that he did not commit sodomy as admitted by the two men in the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court on that day.

Anwar's adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, 37, and his former speechwriter, Dr Munawar Ahmad Anees, 51, were jailed for six months each by the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court yesterday after they pleaded guilty to committing acts of gross indecency by allowing themselves to be sodomised by him.

" My husband decided to swear in God's name because of the specific nature of the allegations. That's why he swears that he did not do it.

" I'm convinced my husband is innocent," she said.

Dr Wan Azizah said she also asked the police to serve dinner for Anwar as he had not eaten.

She urged her husband's supporters to disperse and perform "sembahyang hajat" (prayers) as there was nothing much they could do now.

Before ending her speech, Dr Wan Azizah pledged to continue the struggle for justice.

By her side were her father Datuk Dr Wan Ismail and Parti Rakyat Malaysia president Dr Syed Husin Ali.

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