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Release

LIM GUAN ENG RELEASED FROM KAJANG PRISON

KAJANG, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Former Kota Melaka Member of Parliament and DAP deputy secretary-general Lim Guan Eng was released from the Kajang Prison today after serving one year of his 18-month jail sentence for sedition and defamation.

Guan Eng was taken out of the jail in a prison van accompanied by a police patrol car at about 7.50 am to an unknown destination in Kajang town.

Reporters covering his release later learnt that Guan Eng was taken to a nearby hotel.

An hour after he left the prison about 2,000 supporters, carrying banners and accompanied by a lion dance troupe as well as kompang and tabla drummers, gathered outside the jail to greet him.

At about 9 am, he came back in his father Lim Kit Siang's black Mercedes Benz car to to greet and address his supporters outside the prison's main gate.

Guan Eng, a three-term MP, began his jail sentence on Aug 26 last year when his appeal against conviction under the Sedition Act and the Printing Presses and Publications Act was rejected by the Federal Court.

"I'm most touched by this rousing welcome for me this morning," said a cheerful and healthy-looking Guan Eng, speaking atop the car.

Guan Eng told the crowd that despite being behind bars for a year, his "spirit of Malaysian Malaysia has not dissipated."

He said this was his second time in jail, the first was 12 years6 ago when he was detained under the Internal Security Act over issues linked to the collapse of the MCA's Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

Borrowing from the famous phrase of slain American black leader, Martin Luther King Jr, Guan Eng told the crowd that he has "a dream" too that "one day there will be justice for all Malaysians."

"I will tell Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that I will not let go that dream and I'm willing to go in for the third time for Malaysian Malaysia," he said.

Police presence outside the prison was minimal and no untoward incident was reported.

Later at a news conference at the DAP headquarters in Petaling Jaya, Guan Eng denied he was a chauvinist and spoke of his plans.

Guan Eng said he could not contest in the coming general election by virtue of his conviction.

"But I have a lot things to do for the party in this coming final century election," he said.

The Federal Constitution stipulates that anyone fined RM2,000 and above or imprisoned for 12 months will not be entitled to contest in the general election for five years from the date of his or her release or if the sentence is in the form of a fine, from the date the fine is imposed.

Also present at the news conference were Kit Siang, DAP chairman Dr Chen Man Hin, Selangor PAS Commissioner Haji Mosinun Tahir and Parti Keadilan Nasional and Parti Rakyat Malaysia representatives.

A 2,000-strong crowd also gathered at the DAP headquarters during the press conference.

-- BERNAMA

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