

Anwar and 3 others banned for six months
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim and three other Pakatan Rakyat MPs were suspended from Parliament for six months today in votes that triggered pandemonium and an opposition walkout.

NONEAnwar was earlier found guilty of misleading members in a row over a national unity slogan.

He had criticised the government's '1Malaysia' slogan, which he said had been copied from the 'One Israel' political alliance of former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak in 1999.

The government had yesterday cited three senior opposition MPs for contempt for criticising the parliamentary disciplinary probe against Anwar, and demanded that they also serve six-month suspensions.

The motion against Anwar was passed without any debate after the opposition noisily protested against the move.

The Pakatan Rakyat MPs eventually staged a walkout.

Another motion to suspend three other MPs - R Sivarasa (PKR-Subang), Azmin Ali (PKR-Gombak) and Karpal Singh (DAP-Bukit Gelugor) - was later moved in the House without the presence of the opposition MPs. It was debated and passed.

All four are likely to be forced to sit it out at the next parliamentary session, which is expected to resume in March next year.

Chaotic scenes

"It's so clear, it's blatantly biased," Anwar said after the suspension votes against the four were carried in parliament, where the ruling coalition has a clear majority. "It's a mockery of the entire proceedings."

NONEThe votes were held after chaotic scenes in the House where debate was drowned out by a half-hour shouting match, and opposition lawmakers unfurled placards reading "Save the Parliament".

Anwar led the opposition walkout, chanting "Shame on you".

Anwar was once a deputy prime minister in the ruling coalition but was sacked and jailed a decade ago on separate sex and corruption charges widely seen as politically motivated.

He spent six years in jail before the original sex conviction was overturned, and returned to parliament at the helm of a reinvigorated opposition which made huge strides in 2008 elections.

New polls are expected to be held early next year, but although the suspension will bar

Anwar from attending parliamentary debates, his party says it will not sideline him or affect its election preparations.

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