

Opposition firebrands back in Parliament
Malaysiakini.com
June 16, 2011

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim and three other MPs returned to Parliament today after an absence of six months, and they were welcomed warmly with floral bouquets and greetings from fellow parliamentarians.

The others suspended from the Dewan Rakyat last December were senior opposition member Karpal Singh (DAP-Bukit Gelugor), besides Azmin Ali (PKR- Gombak) and R Sivarasa (PKR-Subang).

Several well-wishers presented the four with bouquets of flowers, with Sivarasa seen brandishing a loudhailer, symbolising their stifled voice in the House during the suspension.

Anwar (PKR - Permatang Pauh) was booted out on Dec 16 last year after a majority vote in favour of the Rights and Privileges Committee's recommendation to suspend him for misleading the Dewan Rakyat in a row involving the government's '1Malaysia' campaign.

Karpal, Azmin and Sivarasa were thrown out the same day for supporting Anwar and insisting that the speaker allows him to present his case during the sitting, which was the last for the year.

During Question Time, Anwar had queried Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Maslan on the Federal Land Development Authority's (Felda) borrowings from the Employee's Provident Fund (EPF), which amounted to RM6 billion.

'Suspension still unlawful'

At a press conference later, the four MPs maintained that their suspension from Parliament was unlawful and that they would take the matter to court.

"The suspension was grossly unfair and it did not give us a chance to defend ourselves, which shows a massive flaw in our parliamentary system," said Anwar.

Added Karpal: "Six months ago, we said that the suspension was unlawful, which we maintain to this day. We will certainly take this matter to court."

However, he said, that they would take a wait-and-see position first, and would only proceed with a lawsuit after the Court of Appeal rules on the earlier year-long suspension of the DAP MP for Puchong, Gobind Singh Deo.

Gobind was on March 16, 2009, suspended from the House for a year without pay for unparliamentary conduct in implicating Prime Minister Najib Razak in the murder of Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu.

He challenged in the suspension in the High Court, which decided in his favour that his suspension without pay was unlawful and that such decisions of the Dewan Rakyat speaker are open to judicial review. The attorney-general has appealed this decision.

"It won't be an academic exercise. We want a declaration that the suspension was invalid. In no way will we waive that right," said Karpal.

Azmin said the parliamentary sitting next week would see fireworks.

"With the federal government asking for RM13 billion as supplementary budget, we will be revealing a lot more abuse of funds by the government.

"We want to show that it won't be easy any more for the BN," Azmin added.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/167080>