

**German MPs: Sodomy II aimed at blocking Anwar**  
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While top leaders of Asean countries are addressing various issues of the region in Bali, a group of German MPs tried to draw their attention to the ongoing second sodomy trial of Malaysia's opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Describing it as a "process of eliminating political opponents", the Asean Parliamentary Group of the German Parliament said the trial aims to hamstring Anwar and Pakatan Rakyat's reform momentum in the next general election.

"We are carefully observing the trial of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim which is set to resume on Nov 23 and due for completion in December.

"During a visit to Malaysia at the start of 2011, our suspicions were confirmed that the trial may well be a process of eliminating political opponents," said Dr Thomas Gambke, head of the Asean Parliamentary Group in a statement released last Friday.

"The team of lawyers defending Anwar Ibrahim were gravely disadvantaged during the entire two years of the drawn-out trial.

"We believe that the timing of the impending conviction of Anwar Ibrahim on sodomy charges has been planned to coincide with the Parliamentary elections due in the spring of 2012 (March, April and May).

"If convicted, the opposition leader would lose his parliamentary seat thus weakening the entire opposition movement," he said.

Although the term for the current administration only ends in May 2013, it was widely speculated that uncertainties in the global economy will give Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak little choice but to call the general election in 2012.

If convicted, Anwar would lose his MP status for Permatang Pauh and banned from contesting election or holding any post in any political party for five years.

After he was sacked as deputy prime minister in 1998 and subsequently convicted of power abuse, Anwar was out of active politics for five years until April 2008 because of the ban.

The German MP group also called on Najib's administration to ensure a fair game in the coming polls.

"We appeal to the Malaysian government to respect and regard seriously the goals of the movement for democratic reform of the electoral system, whose leading figure is Anwar Ibrahim.

"Measures to prevent electoral fraud should be introduced together with greater access to the public media for opposition parties which to date are in control of five of the thirteen states of Malaysia.

"A politically motivated trial of Anwar Ibrahim would only damage the international image of Malaysia," the statement read.

The Board of the Asean Parliamentary Group (Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) includes its chairperson, Dr Thomas Gambke (Alliance 90/The Greens), and deputy chairman Dr Michael Fuchs (CDU/CSU), Holger Ortel (SPD), Dr hc Jürgen Koppelin (FDP) and Caren Lay (the Left.)