

**Anwar dismisses RPK's taunt over debate**  
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has denied that he had forced blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin out of a forum with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange in the UK.

In a statement issued today, Anwar's chief of staff Ibrahim Yaacob clarified that WikiLeaks had initially invited Anwar for a one-on-one interview with Assange.

NONE"Only after that were we informed that Raja Petra wanted to join the interview. So Anwar stressed that he had only agreed to an interview with Assange," reads the statement.

"So, Quick Roll Productions, the producer involved in this interview, made the decision to continue the interview format between Anwar and Assange without involving others.

"The editorial decision was solely made by Quick Roll Productions and not by Anwar's office."

azlanIbrahim lashed out at Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for exploiting "false information" to defame Anwar as someone afraid to debate with Raja Petra.

Last Friday, Raja Petra had reportedly claimed that Anwar had excluded him from the forum, saying this showed Anwar is afraid to face him in the discussion, which was to include politics in Malaysia.

"How is Anwar going to debate Najib when he is too chicken to face me? He should try me out first before taking on Najib," news portal Free Malaysia Today had quoted him as saying.

"Also, it appears that Anwar does not tolerate and respect the independence of the media or dissent."

However, Ibrahim reiterated Anwar's debate challenge to Najib.

"We are of the view that it is good for the people and the nation if Najib agrees to debate with Anwar," he added.

"Najib's reluctance to debate with Anwar has left a question mark as to whether the premier is afraid, or not committed to strengthening democratic practices."

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