

'In Anwar's appeal, no hope for Aussie backing'

MalaysiaKini.com

Oct 21, 2014

While a PKR delegation lobbies for Australian support ahead of its de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's appeal for the Sodomy II trial, political scientist James Chin said there is "no hope" for their success.

"The Abbott (left) government loves Najib," he reportedly told the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), referring to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his Australian counterpart Tony Abbott.

He was quoted in the Sydney-based daily today as saying that Australia favoured Najib's administration over that of Indonesia, and views the former as being modern, secular, and like-minded in contrast to the backward Indonesia.

This is despite the reverse being true, said the commentary written by SMH's international editor Peter Hartcher, under the headline 'One step forward for Indonesia, one step back for Malaysia'.

The report highlighted how Indonesia is becoming more progressive, as it transferred power from one directly elected president to another for the first time, and remains under secular rule and does not impose Islamic standards on other faiths.

In contrast, it pointed out among others that Malaysia is being ruled by the same party since independence, is expanding its crackdown on political dissidents, and had attempted to regulate the "body and behaviour" of non-Muslims as well as Muslims.

The Court of Appeal had sentenced Anwar to five years imprisonment for allegedly sodomising his former aide Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

He and his party had claimed that the charges were politically motivated, and is appealing to the Federal Court on Oct 28.

Meanwhile, the PKR delegation to Australia said it had a fruitful discussion with Australian Foreign Minister and Liberal Party of Australia deputy chief Julie Bishop.

"In the meeting, the PKR delegation brought the issue of Anwar's trial, the Sedition Act, and racial issues that are being played up as political tools in Malaysia to be discussed with Julie Bishop, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia.

"The meeting went well and is considered a success by the PKR delegation," it said, adding that the meetings there and in other countries are meant to draw global attention to alleged breaches in the rule of law in Malaysia.

The members of the delegation are Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli, Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin, and Semambu assemblyperson Lee Chean Chung.

It said their efforts include a joint press conference with Australian senator Nick Xenophon (right) and meetings with parliamentarians, senators, and embassies, and the effort will continue in other countries.

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