

Who is the Najib gov't bluffing?

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MP SPEAKS The credibility, independence and professionalism of the Malaysian judiciary was gravely sullied by the extraordinary Prime Minister's Office (PMO) statement on Feb 10 defending the Federal Court decision on the Anwar Ibrahim case even before the completion of the Federal Court judicial process.

Yesterday, the government came out in defence of the PMO's lightning quick response to the Anwar Ibrahim judgment by the Federal Court, saying it is normal procedure to prepare statements in advance.

A government spokesperson, in an email communique to Malaysiakini said: "It's clear that the politicians, lawyers, communications teams and journalists involved with this case prepared text for guilty and not guilty verdicts.

"Similarly, the government prepared a statement in advance for either outcome. This is entirely standard professional practice, especially in a case that involves public interest.

"To suggest otherwise is intentionally misleading."

Who is the Najib government bluffing?

Here are 13 questions for Najib to answer to salvage the credibility, independence and professionalism of Malaysian judiciary which had been gravely sullied by the extraordinary PMO statement on Feb 10 defending the Federal Court decision on Anwar case even before the completion of the judicial process:

1. Can the government explain how the PMO could issue a statement defending the Federal Court decision to dismiss Anwar Ibrahim's appeal within minutes of the Chief Justice Arifin Zakaria's announcement and even before the sentencing, claiming that "exhaustive and comprehensive due process...is now complete" when in fact it had not been completed?
2. Secondly, the PMO has probably the world's greatest genius in its employ, who is also the fastest speed reader in the world – as the Chief Justice had taken two hours to read out his judgment but the PMO "genius" took only a few minutes to digest the complicated technical and legal jargon and arguments in the judgment to come out with a statement in response.
3. The PMO statement said: "In this case, exhaustive and comprehensive due process has been followed over many years. That process is now complete, and we call on all parties involved to respect the legal process and judgment." The PMO office statement is in fact the best proof of the disrespect and blatant tampering with the due legal and judicial process. Why did the Prime Minister countenance it?

4. Does the PMO really expect the people to believe that it had prepared a statement in advance for either outcome, i.e. a prepared text for guilty and not guilty verdicts. Is the PMO prepared to immediately release the “not guilty” draft statement to prove that it really existed?

5. How many times have the PMO prepared a statement in advance for either outcome of guilty or not guilty in criminal cases, and to state the number of such statements issued by the PMO under the premiership of (a) Najib Razak; (b) Abdullah Badawi and (c) Mahathir Mohamad.

6. Why did the PMO prepare and release a statement in the Anwar Ibrahim case when the government claimed that the case was brought by a private individual and had nothing with the government? How many such “private individual” cases had there been in the past where the government had issued a statement at the conclusion of the case, and to cite the cases and the PMO statements involved?

7. The PMO statement said: “The judges will have reached their verdict only after considering all the evidence in a balanced and objective manner.” How can the PMO make such a judgmental statement without reading or studying the Federal Court verdict – which took the Chief Justice two hours to read out but the PMO statement was issued within minutes, even before the completion of the judicial process with the passing of the sentence?

8. The PMO statement further stated: “Malaysia has an independent judiciary, and there have been many rulings against senior government figures.” Name the “senior government figures” comparable in station to the parliamentary opposition leader, like the prime minister, deputy prime minister and cabinet ministers who had been found guilty and jailed under the law in the past 34 years under three Prime Ministers?

9. The PMO statement said: “The police report against Anwar Ibrahim was brought by a private individual – Anwar’s employee and personal assistant – not by the government. As the victim of a serious sexual assault, he had every right to have his case heard in court.” Was this allegation in the PMO statement accusing Anwar of brutal rape which does not jive with the case brought by the prosecution against Anwar – consensual sex - made with the approval of the prosecution team headed by Datuk Shafee Abdullah or Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail? Why is the PMO upping the attack against Anwar by claiming that Anwar was guilty of brutal rape against Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azan when Anwar was charged under a section of the law that deals with consensual sodomy.

10. Is the PMO statement pre-empting criticisms against Anwar’s conviction for sodomy because of the many “glaring anomalies” which feed suspicions that Anwar’s case was one of political persecution rather than criminal prosecution, as for instance, why Saiful was not prosecuted similarly for consensual sodomy.

11. What is the reason for Najib’s discriminatory handling of cases of Anwar and the chief protagonists in the Altantuya Shaariibuu murder case, Abdul Razak Baginda, Chief

Inspector Azilah Hadri and Corporal Sirul Azhar Umar, and in particular, why there was no PMO statement at the end of the murder trial at the Federal Court which raise serious doubts about Najib's credibility and commitment to the causes of justice and moderation.

12. Who will bear full responsibility for the PMO statement on Anwar Ibrahim's case –Prime Minister Najib Razak, the Attorney-General Abdul Gani Patail or the public prosecutor-under-fiat Shafee Abdullah, or two or all three of them? Malaysians are entitled to know whether the prime minister, the attorney-general or the public prosecutor-under-fiat, or two or all three of them, had been consulted, given consent or had prior knowledge of the PMO statement or is it another case like the Home Minister Abdul Zahid Hamidi's infamous letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) vouching for the character and integrity of an alleged gambling kingpin standing trial for illegal gambling in Las Vegas, Nevada, contradicting the earlier police report to FBI and sent without knowledge or agreement of the inspector-general of police, the Foreign Ministry or the prime minister.

13. Is it true that the PMO statement is the product of Najib's "PR guru", former APCO Malaysia boss Paul Stadlen, who is paid several millions of ringgit a year by the government to mastermind the prime minister's communications operations, as alleged by the Sarawak Report website.

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