

Swiss to take Anwar conviction to UN
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The Swiss government will raise the conviction of Anwar Ibrahim at the next United Nations Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva.

This is according to a statement issued by the Swiss Foreign Ministry to queries by the Bruno Manser Fund (BMF).

The ministry will also address the conviction during the next round of bilateral political talks with Malaysia planned for later this year in Switzerland.

It stated that human rights issues are part of the ongoing free trade talks between Malaysia and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), for which Switzerland is the lead negotiator within EFTA.

In welcoming the move, BMF also called for international support to demand for Anwar's immediate release.

The opposition leader is currently serving a five-year prison sentence after the Federal Court on Tuesday upheld his sodomy conviction.

Anwar has always maintained that the charge against him was fabricated by his political rivals, but the government has denied this.

Following his conviction, the 67-year-old politician launched acerbic salvo on the judges from the dock accusing them of colluding with their political masters.

'Najib risks becoming international outcast'

Commenting on the Swiss government's intervention, PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli said it could not come at a worse possible time for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Malaysia after the nation secured a UN security council seat.

"Umno and BN must wake up and realise that the 'persecution' of Anwar would go beyond them. They may hate Anwar, but by doing this, Malaysians would have to pay the price.

"We live in an interconnected world, and trade is the mainstay of our economy. I believe that other countries would also press Malaysia to be more accountable," he told Malaysiakini.

Therefore, Rafizi warned that instead of "killing" Anwar politically, his rivals will turn him into an international hero instead.

Any government, he argued, which looks at the judgment on the opposition leader's case will know that Anwar is a prisoner of conscience.

"So if I were Najib, I would consider releasing Anwar at some point because the pressure is going to build and the prime minister risks becoming an international outcast," he added.

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