

**Anwar skips joint presser with Dr M, MP claims 'he does not want to be used'**

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UPDATED 3.32PM | Added response from PKR veep Chang Lil Kang on the absence of PKR MPs.

PKR president Anwar Ibrahim was absent from a Pakatan Harapan joint press conference with Bersatu chairperson Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Warisan.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a PKR lawmaker said Anwar was invited but was not keen about the press conference.

"Anwar said Tun (Mahathir) asked them for a joint-press conference but Anwar told PKR leaders that he did not want to be used," the MP told Malaysiakini this afternoon.

However, PKR communications director Fahmi Fadzil, when contacted, said Anwar had to attend an interview with the New York Times and the latter

informed the other leaders to proceed without him.

He added that Anwar will issue a joint statement with the opposition leaders later but did not explain the absence of other PKR representatives at the press conference.

Amanah president Mohamad Sabu and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng were present on behalf of Harapan while Warisan president Shafie Apdal also attended.

Mahathir, who is Bersatu chairperson, took the lead during the press conference.

The seat beside him was occupied by Bersatu deputy president Mukhriz Mahathir instead.

The press conference at the Yayasan Perdana Leadership Foundation in Putrajaya was intended for the opposition to respond to the Parliament sitting this morning.

Several MPs, except for those from PKR, were also present clad in their ceremonial attire.

Quizzed on Anwar and PKR's absence during the press conference, Mahathir replied: "He has sent a statement but is not able to attend."

The former premier is engaged in a power struggle with his successor and Bersatu president Muhyiddin Yassin for control of the party.

Muhyiddin had pulled Bersatu out of Harapan to form the new Perikatan Nasional government with PKR defectors, BN, PAS, GPS, PBS and STAR while Mahathir wants Bersatu back in Harapan.

Following Bersatu's exit, Mahathir could no longer hold the position of Harapan chairperson and Anwar has since been appointed as the new chair.

Some PKR leaders have expressed reluctance over the continued cooperation with Mahathir as they blame Bersatu for the collapse of the Harapan government.

Amanah and DAP, on the other hand, have been more receptive.

Anwar has also indicated a willingness to work with Mahathir but PKR appears to want the cooperation to be on its terms.

A press statement was issued after the press conference with Anwar being

among the signatories.

The other signatories were Mahathir, Lim, Mohamad, Shafie and Upko president Wilfred Madius Tangau. Upko is a Warisan ally.

Meanwhile, when contacted, PKR vice-president Chang Lil Kang said PKR lawmakers couldn't make it to the joint presser as they were notified quite late.

"We were first notified by Warisan Batu Sapi MP Liew Vui Keong at 10.34am and 11.07am. He told us to meet at Tun's office at Putrajaya this afternoon," he said.

"This was a short notice either from Tun or Warisan. So, it is rather a coordination issue," he said.

He denied that relations between PKR and Mahathir's faction in Bersatu had turned sour nor PKR was not in line with both Harapan party leaders who attended the press conference.

When asked if the party could still cooperate with Mahathir, he said: "(Yes), we are always the Harapan 'plus plus'. Plus plus is Tun's (faction in Bersatu) and Warisan."

He said there would be no problem for PKR MPs to attend the presser if they were notified about the event much earlier.

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