

On anniversary of Anwar's arrest, PSM recollects call to fight corruption

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Bernama

On Sept 20, 1998, armed police commandos wearing balaclavas stormed the residence of a high-profile politician in Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur.

Eighteen days earlier, he was sacked as the deputy prime minister.

Recalling this incident, PSM deputy chairperson S Arutchelvan said that hours earlier, Anwar Ibrahim had organised a massive gathering in the nation's capital which rattled the powers that be.

"It was not a religious gathering which would easily gather the people.

"It was a gathering which started a movement calling for institutional changes as well as to fight cronyism and corruption. That movement was reformasi," he said, in a statement to Malaysiakini.

Juxtaposing this episode with the events over the past weeks, the PSM leader said the "founder" of the Reformasi movement is now "haunted" by the same

accusations he had levelled against Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other political opponents in the past.

Arutchelvan was referring to the discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) granted to Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He also censured the opposition for staging a walkout from Parliament and failing to ask hard questions when Anwar, who is now the prime minister, was trying to explain the DNAA issue.

“The performance of the opposition yesterday was truly pathetic and childish. They wasted time and the opportunity (to ask questions).

“They staged a walkout for a reason which did not warrant such a reaction. They failed to ask the hard questions and ended up shouting for no reason. Perhaps, this is for their TikTok,” he added.

On the same note, Arutchelvan claimed that Anwar’s explanation was also not convincing and did not include any new information apart from his denial of having interfered in the matter.

“Since the roles and powers of the attorney-general (AG) and public prosecutor have not been separated and since the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) is

under the Prime Minister's Department, Anwar should have taken ownership," he added.

Arutchelvan said the prime minister should have revealed the 11 grounds which prompted the previous AG, Idrus Harun, to withdraw the 47 charges against Zahid.

Should have left it to court

"At the end of the day, Anwar just blamed it all on the previous AG, old precedents etc.

"Everybody knows that after a prima facie case is established and defence has been called, one should just let the court decide. If Zahid loses, he can still appeal," he added.

However, Arutchelvan said the DNAA had created the perception that Zahid, who is also the Umno president, was "rescued by an old friend to repay his debt".

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