

Dr M secretariat urges Anwar to quit over judiciary crisis, mulls legal action

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Calls for Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to resign from his position over concerns about the integrity of the country's judiciary have intensified, with the Defend the Judiciary Secretariat threatening to take the matter to court.

Lawyer Rafique Rashid Ali said that during the secretariat's meeting earlier today, the group led by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad decided to rescind its earlier resolution calling for Anwar to take a leave of absence.

Instead, he said the secretariat is now pushing for the prime minister to relinquish his post immediately on the grounds that the premier has a conflict of interest in judiciary appointments, as he is a party in several civil lawsuits.

"We have considered other measures suggested by several quarters, including Rafizi Ramli's proposal for the formation of a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) and for a Parliamentary Special Select Committee to probe certain allegations.

"However, both suggestions remain under the control and oversight of the prime

minister. The prime minister is the problem and therefore, the prime minister must go," Rafique told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

The Pejuang information chief added that the secretariat also discussed taking their grievances to the courts, with the potential legal action understood to be aimed at questioning whether a prime minister embroiled in civil disputes can advise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the appointment of judges.

Meanwhile, Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) president P Waythamoorthy said that while the Federal Constitution provides the prime minister with the exclusive right to advise the Agong on judiciary appointments, the courts should determine whether Anwar is able to exercise such a right.

He highlighted that a civil lawsuit initiated by Anwar's former aide Yusoff Rawther poses serious concerns.

"(The case) shows that the prime minister is not qualified to (advise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong) on the appointment of any judges (potentially set to) make decisions in his own case," he added.

Yesterday, opposition leader Hamzah Zainudin called for Anwar to go on leave, framing the call as being consistent with the palace's decree that judicial appointments must be handled with care and integrity.

The Bersatu deputy president's statement came after a warning from Istana Negara against politicising judiciary appointment matters.

The palace's input on the issue came amid the call for the RCI, initiated by several PKR lawmakers led by Rafizi, and picked up by the Malaysian Bar, which is organising a march next Monday to push for the commission to be formed.

Separately, Perikatan Nasional is organising a series of rallies urging Anwar to resign over various matters, including the rising cost of living due to the sales and service tax expansion.

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