

**May 13 book: Anwar says 'No' to ban**  
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Banning a controversial book on the May 13 riots will violate the right to freedom of expression enshrined in the Federal Constitution, said PKR adviser Anwar Ibrahim.

He said in an age where information flows freely, constitutional freedoms must be honoured rather than breached.

"Laws and regulations which purport to grant power to the state to proscribe publications arbitrarily must only be used under the most exceptional circumstances.

"The book may indeed be controversial but if the government does not agree with the issues raised, it should refute them in an open and transparent manner," he added in a statement today.

Anwar, a former deputy premier, said the government cannot continually adopt strong-arm measures in an attempt to silence public discourse.

"This is quite apart from the fact that the banning of any book immediately enhances its value and whets the appetite of readers.

"More significantly, banning this book will reinforce its thesis that the May 13 riots were indeed caused by a coup plotted by certain leaders to oust (then premier) Tunku Abdul Rahman," he added.

### **Demystifying process**

The book - 'May 13 Declassified Documents on the Racial Riots of 1969' - was launched on May 13 this month. It was penned by academic Dr Kua Kia Soong.

Since hitting the shelves, the book has been a fast seller. On Tuesday, Internal Security Ministry personnel confiscated 10 copies for 'studying' sparking off concerns that a ban could be enforced.

Meanwhile, Anwar said he views the book as the start of a process to 'demystify' the May 13 riots.

He noted that nearly after four decades, the riots are still talked about in hushed tones because the authorities have not provided any conclusive answers.

"There are bound to be divergent views about this tragic episode of our history. I call on all Malaysians to have an open mind in the discourse while respecting the sensitivities of all communities," he added.

The author of the book had spent three-months researching recently declassified documents at the Public Records Office in London.

He concluded that the 1969 riots were not spontaneous racial outburst but a planned coup attempt by 'Malay capitalists' against Tunku.

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