

'I've tasted the bitter and the sweet'

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PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail has reiterated her intention to relinquish her post which she has held since the opposition party's inception in 1999.

"Many times I have expressed my intention to let go the presidency as soon as Anwar (Ibrahim) is ready," she told the 3,000-odd guests and delegates at the party's annual congress held at a Chinese high school in Seremban today.

"But do not doubt that I will continue to serve and contribute to PKR as best as I can," she stressed in her hour-long keynote address, adding that she has never once felt "regret or weak" in her political career despite the overwhelming odds.

"I have tasted the bitter and the sweet of politics. I have even tasted the pain of a tear-gas grenade.

"I have had my own home attacked, and my own poor children forced to live in fear. I have been treated with contempt, even dishonoured by the foulest lies."

Despite her decision to relinquish her position earlier, Wan Azizah contested for the presidency today.

She was involved in a three-cornered fight with her husband Anwar, the PKR advisor, and former party treasurer Abdul Rahman Othman.

However, both of the challengers withdrew their candidacy at the eleventh hour and Wan Azizah was subsequently elected unopposed.

The ROS had yesterday rejected Anwar's application for an exemption on the ban.

'Don't kill the struggle'

Meanwhile, Wan Azizah reminded the party members to hold on to its struggle firmly.

As she departed from her prepared text towards the end and shared the story on Solomon's justice, she made an emotional appeal: "Don't kill what we have been fighting for, hold on, hold on to our struggle. Reformasi!"

The crowd replied with loud chanting of 'reformasi' (reform).

The president's speech also touched on various national issues including education, economy and worker's right.

Anwar and Wan Azizah - both clad in a blue traditional Malay costume - arrived at the school at about 9.15am to a multi-racial and colourful welcome, including the playing of kompang, traditional Indian drums and lion dance. They later inspected a guard-of-honour formed by the party's youth and women wings.

Guest present included PAS vice-president Mohamad Sabu, secretary-general Kamaruddin

Jaafar, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, diplomats and representatives from the NGOs.

Prominent businessman Soh Chee Wen (right) was also seen among the VIPs.

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