

Anwar to answer for Apco remarks on June 8
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim will be summoned to testify before the powerful parliamentary rights and privileges committee at its next meeting on June 8.

He will have to defend himself over remarks in the Dewan Rakyat alleging that the 1Malaysia idea was created by public relations firm Apco Worldwide and that the 1Malaysia slogan is linked to the 'One Israel' campaign.

NONEBukit Gelugor MP Karpal Singh, who is a member of the bipartisan committee, said its first meeting today had set the preliminary agenda and schedule.

"The discussion was more on the procedure, how we (would) go about it and the witnesses to be called," he said.

The hearing will coincide with the second day of the next parliamentary session, and will begin after the Question hour.

Karpal said the committee decided that Anwar would be called first, followed by de facto law minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz.

The committee's decision to call any witnesses "will depend very much on Anwar's evidence".

Viewing the proceedings as a very serious matter, Karpal said this will be Anwar's chance to defend himself because his political career is at stake, since "the power given to the privileges committee is very wide".

"No doubt the privileges committee only makes recommendations to the House (and) the House decides in the end. But unfortunately, the House will (most likely just) give (the recommendations) a stamp of approval," he said.

Other members at the meeting included parliamentarians Razali Ibrahim (Muar), Alor Gajah MP Foong Chan Onn (Alor Gajah), Nancy Shukri (Batang Saadong), deputy speaker Ronald Kiandee and speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia. Subang MP R Sivarasa is on sick leave.

'I will attend'

In an immediate reaction, Anwar indicated his readiness to appear before the committee.

"I have no problems in facing the committee. I have enough documents and evidence to show the link between Apco, Israel and Malaysia," he told reporters in Shah Alam.

azlanAnwar however questioned the date picked for the hearing, saying it will coincide with his slot to speak in the Dewan Rakyat.

"I will ask that the committee pick a date that will not affect my speech and (opportunity to) debate," said the Permatang Pauh MP.

Anwar got into hot water during the debates at the last parliamentary sitting, when he

linked Apco, Israel and 1Malaysia.

The government responded by citing him for misleading the House, using the Standing Orders to refer him to the rights and privileges committee.

Pakatan Rakyat leaders see this is another bid to silence Anwar, as the committee has the power to suspend him.

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