

Anwar on global tour to highlight sodomy case
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim is on a global tour to highlight his case ahead of a trial on sodomy charges, which he says is baseless and politically motivated.

Speaking in Berlin on Thursday after meeting with parliamentarians and political activists, Anwar said that he was using the opportunity of his bail period before the trial to underline what he called Malaysia's endemic corruption and politically biased judiciary.

The charge against Anwar Ibrahim

That you, on June 26, 2008 between 3.01pm and 4.30pm at Unit 11-5-1, Desa Damansara Condominium, No 99 Jalan Setiakasih, Bukit Damansara in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, intentionally had carnal intercourse against the order of nature with Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan where you inserted your penis into his anus, and therefore you had committed a crime which can be punishable under section 377B of the Penal Code.

Penal Code, section 377B
Committing carnal intercourse against the order of nature

Whoever voluntarily commits carnal intercourse against the order of nature shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 20 years, and shall also be liable to whipping.

Azlan Zamhari / Malaysiakini

"The government says that this case is nothing to do with them, but the facts are to the contrary," he said.

Anwar is currently fighting fresh allegations of sodomy which threaten to derail his political career and put him back in jail, where he already served six years on a previous homosexuality conviction.

The former deputy prime minister's party PKR quadrupled its seats in the general election in March 2008, raising the possibility of the fall of Barisan Nasional, which has ruled Malaysia since independence.

Anwar says that the latest allegations - made by a former male aide - are an attempt by the government of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to defuse the political threat he poses.

Homosexuality - treated legally as sodomy - is an offence in Malaysia. If convicted, the politician faces up to 20 years in jail, and would be barred from politics.

Anwar and members of his coalition have met lawmakers and officials in Brussels, and are set to travel to London, Barcelona, New York and Jakarta before the trial commences on October 14.

'Raise our voices before it is too late'

Anwar has received support from leading members of the German parliament while in Berlin, although he did not have any official meetings with the government.

The German Foreign Office did not respond to a request for information on Anwar's visit.

The Chairman of the Germany-Asean parliamentary group, Green Party politician Thomas Gambke (*right*), called on Malaysia to uphold the provisions of Asean's charter on the protection of human rights.



"We have to raise our voices to say something. When they throw him into prison, it is too late," he told the German press agency dpa.

"If Anwar continues to contribute (to political life), it would strengthen, not weaken Malaysia," he said.

Speaking as a guest of the liberal Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Anwar appealed for solidarity, but said he was not expecting other countries to intervene in Malaysian politics.

"But express your position on democratic values and justice," he said.

"Why allow a country to stumble and fall before you express your opinion?" he said.

This week, British tycoon Richard Branson said, while visiting Kuala Lumpur, that the Anwar case was damaging Malaysia's image abroad.

Anwar said that a guilty conviction would strengthen his multi-ethnic coalition. "If you put me inside, it will be a win for us," he said.

- *dpa*

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