

Wan Azizah wants PM to assure Anwar's safety
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PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail today said that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should personally guarantee the safety of her husband Anwar Ibrahim for him to leave the Turkish embassy.

MCPX

"If he (Abdullah) gives his words, I'll take it," Wan Azizah, who is also the Permatang Pauh MP told a joint press conference with Pakatan Rakyat leaders at the Parliament lobby today.

parliament pakatan walkout gobind singh pc images 300608 02She said that Anwar, the PKR's de facto leader, would be willing to face police probe into a sodomy allegation if Abdullah can give such a guarantee.

"If we get the guarantee, of course Anwar won't run away to anywhere else, this is his home country. He will face any false allegations thrown at him," stressed Wan Azizah.

However, she added that Abdullah's guarantee must be a "serious" one due to what happened to Anwar during his 1998 detention, where Anwar suffered the infamous 'black eye' incident.

parliament pakatan walkout gobind singh pc images 300608 04Also present at the press conference were her eldest and youngest daughters, Nurul Izzah and Nurul Hana, as well as PAS deputy president Nasharuddin Mat Isa and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

A one-page letter from Wan Azizah was also handed over to Abdullah's office in Parliament later this afternoon in seeking for a meeting to get the word of guarantee from the premier.

'He is fine'

Anwar is presently holed up at the Turkish embassy since 6am yesterday after claiming that he feared a government assassination plot after facing accusation that he sodomised a male aide.

Wan Azizah also said that she had met Anwar at the embassy yesterday and that "he is fine".

To a question, Wan Azizah said she could not accept the guarantee of Anwar's safety given by Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak earlier today.

"Najib has a 'questionable history' also because the accuser (Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan) has gone to the deputy prime minister's office, I can't take what Najib said," she claimed.

parliament pakatan walkout gobind singh pc images 300608 03Wan Azizah also said it should be left to the police to investigate whether Saiful was indeed at Najib's office to seek government scholarship, as explained by the deputy premier.

She refused to disclose the reasons that Anwar chosen to take refuge in the Turkish

embassy and not elsewhere, but denied claims that Anwar was the one who refused to leave the embassy, as claimed by Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar.

On Syed Hamid's suggestion that Anwar was merely play acting, Wan Azizah answered: "He (Syed Hamid) wasn't the one who was assaulted 10 years ago."

Earlier, Wan Azizah read out a four-paragraph statement jointly signed by Nasharuddin and Lim also which called for the setting up of an independent inquiry to probe the sodomy allegation.

"The people have lose their faith in the police when it was the inspector general of police (Rahim Noor) then who assaulted Anwar in the 1998 scandal," read the statement.

In an interview with AFP today, Anwar also sought a similar guarantee from the government.

"I need categorical assurance on my safety. You know I have previously been assaulted to near death," Anwar said, referring to a beating he received after being sacked as deputy premier and hit with sex and corruption charges in 1998.

Activists, NGOs briefed on situation

Meanwhile, about 50 activists and representatives of non-governmental organisations rallied at Parliament in solidarity for Anwar and to call for "all Malaysians" to continue supporting the changes brought about by the 12th general election.

gobind singh deo and pakatan mp walkout of parliament 300608 07Reading from a prepared statement, director of workers advocacy group Tenaganita Irene Fernandez condemned Federal Criminal Investigations Department director Bakri Zinin who had reportedly advised people against showing their dissatisfaction with the police "through demonstrations".

"We remind him that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are some of the fundamental rights of people that ensure genuine democracy is upheld and practiced," said Fernandez.

"The police should and must not create fear nor restrain people gathering together in peaceful assembly to express their response collectively to the developments taking place in the country," she added.

Questioning the sodomy allegation against Anwar, Fernandez said it seemed the development indicated efforts were being made to divert people's attention from the everyday hardships caused by the rise of prices of goods and services, high-profile scandals concerning the judiciary and government, and in-fighting within the Barisan Nasional.

"The sexual proclivities of an individual, whether real or fantasised, do not seem to matter when the country is facing a financial crisis and the rakyat is suffering," said Fernandez. She also voiced concern that the investigations into the allegation would not be carried out fairly "as it seems to be politically motivated".

gobind singh deo and pakatan mp walkout of parliament 300608 01Earlier, tempers had flared between officials of Parliament's security unit and leaders of the group following the

former's refusal to allow them past the gate.

PKR Supreme Council member Latheefa Koya, among others, were incensed at being barred given that Azizah - who is Parliament Opposition leader - had herself extended the invitation to all the groups in order to brief them on Anwar's situation.

"What right do they have to restrict us from coming to Parliament?" Latheefa was heard many times saying during the standoff.

After they were allowed in, many mumbled at the hassle they were subjected to on account of wanting to meet opposition MPs.

"Even school children are allowed to come into Parliament. Why are we treated this way? Maybe next time we should wear school uniforms in order to be allowed," one miffed activist was heard saying as they walked past the security gate.

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