

PKR leader says he may be charged with sodomy
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim insisted today he will fight a by-election later this year and form a new government despite fears he will soon be charged with sodomy.
MCPX

"There are thousands of criminal cases not properly investigated. Why pursue this with zeal and in an unjust way? Is it because I will participate in a by-election," Anwar told reporters.

"You want me to withdraw? No. I will continue to pursue the change. Let's see if they want to charge me," he said after being interviewed by Islamic syariah enforcement officials over the sodomy allegations.

Anwar told a crowd in Negri Sembilan last night that he had heard rumours that he could be arrested "soon".

The former deputy prime minister admitted that his family and friends will undergo the same suffering they experienced in 1998 if he is "victimised, arrested and jailed".

Anwar has said the allegations of a young male aide, a repeat of charges that saw him jailed a decade ago, have been fabricated to block his plans to topple the coalition that has ruled Malaysia for half a century.

Probe allegations based on facts

He has demanded that police stop the investigation and called the aide, 23-year-old Mohamad Saiful Bukhari Azlan, an "outright liar" who was working with others in power to frame him. Anwar aims to return to parliament for the first time in a decade if a court orders a by-election near his home town - the next step in his political rehabilitation after being sacked in 1998 and later jailed on sodomy and corruption charges.

A high court in Kedah will hear a challenge on Aug 19, asking it to invalidate the result in a seat that was won by his PKR party in March 8 general elections.

Anwar described the police investigations as a "political vendetta" against him and reminded the security authorities that Malaysia was not a "police state".

"They accuse me of being a person planted by the Americans. They accuse me of wanting to sell this country to China. I advise the police to probe (the allegations) based on facts," he said.

- AFP