

Abdullah defends decision to charge opposition leader

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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has denied allegations of orchestrating sodomy allegations against Anwar Ibrahim to deflect attention from the government's problems.
MCPX

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 05" Why should I try to deflect (attention) from the government's problems?

"Government problems are huge. This (case) is not going to deflect the government's problems. I don't see that," said Abdullah.

Earlier today, Anwar claimed that Abdullah was a "man under siege" and was orchestrating a "sham trial" to protect himself.

Anwar has been ordered to present himself in court at 10am tomorrow to be formally charged for allegedly sodomising his former aide, Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

At a press conference after chairing the Barisan Nasional management committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur today, Abdullah denied that he had a role in the police probe on Anwar.

"How could I insist that he be charged? If there is no evidence, the police are not stupid to charge, just because so-and-so have said 'charge'. I'm not one to say charge.

"I did say: If you have something to charge, if you have evidence, (then proceed with the) charge. If not, drop it," said Abdullah, adding that the matter was up to the police and the Attorney-General's Chambers.

'Saiful has rights too'

Abdullah also dismissed Anwar's suggestions that the impending sodomy charge was meant to sabotage the latter's Permatang Pauh by-election campaign.

The prime minister said he had no role in setting the nomination and polling dates, which were announced by the election commission this morning.

Abdullah added that the public must also not forget Saiful's right to claim justice.

"You seem to think that Anwar is more important. This is an issue of law. He (Saiful) feels that he needs justice, therefore he lodged a report," said the premier.

When pressed if Saiful would be charged for sodomy as well if the alleged sexual encounter was found to be consensual, Abdullah laughed and said that he was not competent to comment on law issues.

"You better read your law. It depends on whether a rape took place, or not. I'm not a lawyer. I don't want to get involved. We'll see when the case goes to court," he said.

Abdullah also advised Anwar to keep his supporters in check and discourage them from demonstrating.

"Why should there be demonstrations? Anwar should tell them, 'There is no need to demonstrate. I'm going there to face them I'm going to show them that their evidence are lies.' That's what he should do," Abdullah said.

DIG's warning

Meanwhile, Deputy Inspector-General of Police Ismail Omar warned Anwar's supporters against doing anything unlawful when the PKR leader attends court tomorrow.

He said the police would not compromise with anyone who tried to undermine public order.

"I wish to remind all quarters, including supporters of Anwar, to abide by the country's laws.

"Do not give vent to your emotions, and let the police do their duty," he said, as quoted by Bernama.

Ismail said Anwar's prosecution was in accordance with the law and was not partial to anyone.

He said plainclothes policemen would be deployed tomorrow to monitor the situation and police would not hesitate to detain anyone who obstructed the due process of the law.

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