

Gus Dur's support for Anwar draws flak
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Former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur came under fire from national news agency MCPX Bernama in an article today which criticised his interference in Malaysia's domestic affairs.

anwar ibrahim and gus dur former indonesia president 110808 04 Titled 'Who is Gus Dur to tell us what to do?', the article stated that it was inappropriate for PKR to use an 'erratic and discredited' personality such as him to shore up support.

The former president had recently visited Anwar Ibrahim and expressed his backing for the PKR de facto leader, who will be contesting in the Aug 26 Permatang Pauh by-election.

Gus Dur also said that he believes Anwar is innocent in relation to the sodomy charge against him and slammed his accuser's swearing on the Quran as an un-Islamic act.

When asked during a recent press conference in Kuala Lumpur if his strong support for Anwar would affect ties between Indonesia and Malaysia, Gus Dur said it did not matter and he would stand by his statements.

On what world leaders thought of Malaysia, he said: "In the eyes of other world leaders the rulers of Malaysia are undemocratic. When you still have a law like the Internal Security Act, why ask about democracy?"

"Other leaders feel the same way as me in that it is impossible that Anwar would have committed such a crime. As such, these allegations have got to be false."

He also said that none of them believed the first sodomy charge against Anwar in 1998 under the tenure of then prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

'He brought untold hardship'

Meanwhile, the Bernama article went on to describe the former Indonesian president as a leader who fell from grace and had led the neighbouring country into disarray.

"For those whose memory may have lapsed, Abdurrahman or popularly known as Gus Dur, Indonesia's fourth president, was perhaps best known as someone who once commanded a coalition of political support and also one who could "unite" Indonesia's politicians into opposing him, and that subsequently led to his impeachment by Indonesia's national assembly (MPR) and fall from grace.

gus dur abdul rahman wahid pkr pc 180808 02 "In all the 18 months that he was president, he brought Indonesia to greater disarray, especially in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta. There were frequent bloody political protests while ethnic and religious strife as well as separatist tensions were frequent in far-flung provinces.

"He brought untold hardship to Indonesians when the rupiah fell even further during his stewardship," read the article, which did not carry a byline.

The article stated further that Abdurrahman left the presidency in July 2001 in a cloud of disgrace amidst allegations of corruption, collusion and nepotism, or popularly known as KKN in Indonesia for "korupsi, kolusi dan nepotisme."

It also quoted Foreign Minister Dr Rais Yatim as describing Abdurrahman as someone who had no support even in his own country.

Recounting the last days of his presidency, the article said: "All the qualities that were once hailed about Gus Dur appeared to be his shortcomings - his tenacity was seen as stubbornness, his outspokenness as diplomatically dangerous, and in the process, he upset a number of foreign governments."

"Far from being a model of democratic leadership, he has been seen as high-handed and autocratic. He did not hide his disdain and contempt for the Indonesian parliament and even described it as a kindergarten."

Embroided in corruption scandal

Bernamea also noted that Abdurrahman was embroiled in a corruption scandal when his personal masseur fled, allegedly with more than US\$4 million of government money.

"Gus Dur himself was accused of misappropriating donations amounting to US\$2 million from the Sultan of Brunei in a scandal known as Bruneigate as the money was received outside of government channels.

"He was also censured for the Bulogate scandal for he was found to be involved in the withdrawal and disbursement of 35 billion rupiah (about US\$3.7 million) from the National Logistics Agency (BULOG) which was pocketed by his close allies.

"He was censured by parliament despite his repeated denials of wrongdoing and the somewhat circumstantial evidence against him."

According to the article, most people remember him as having failed to fulfil the people's reform mandate and having wasted the legitimacy given to him by the people, and that he had failed to uphold the supremacy of the law and maintain national unity.

In July 2001, it added, the showdown between the Indonesian parliament and Abdurrahman reached a climax. He refused to appear before Parliament and tried to dissolve Parliament and call for new elections.

Six cabinet ministers resigned. Parliament then unanimously voted to impeach and dismiss him for corruption and incompetence.

gus dur abdul rahman wahid pkr pc 180808 07"Despite being stripped of power, Gus Dur refused to vacate the presidential palace. The standoff lasted three days before it eventually dawned on him that he no longer had the support of the people and decided to leave. In the face of adversity, he chose not to stay in Indonesia and fled the country."

The article also stated that Abdurrahman with his 'erratic behaviour and conflicting statements' also flirted with Jewish organisations despite his strong Islamic credentials.

"Is this the kind of personality who could inspire us Malaysians?" it asked.

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