

Hindraf's London start for global Anwar campaign
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 19, 2010
Joe Fernandez

Hindraf has initiated a global campaign for opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim beginning with an Early Day Motion (EDM) in the British Parliament.

Malaysiakini was tipped off on the EDM by Suresh Grover who heads The Monitoring Group, a human rights organisation in Britain and Northern Ireland.

Anwar's people, according to Grover, approached Hindraf chair P. Waythamoorthy to do something for him and the latter suggested an EDM filed through an MP.

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington, North London, who will introduce the EDM, said he was approached by Waythamoorthy.

"We are 100 per cent for Anwar. He's a good man badly treated by the Malaysian Government," said Corbyn yesterday in a telephone interview with Malaysiakini.

"The charges levelled at him are not correct. The EDM is an expression of parliamentary opinion on the matter."

NONThe Labour MP based his characterisation of Anwar (right) on his efforts over the years to forge a closer understanding between the West and Islam.

He also disclosed that he, like many other members of the British Parliament, had known Anwar for a long time and could vouch for him.

Citing his EDM, Corbyn called on the Malaysian government to "bring an end to the harassment and persecution of members of the political opposition".

He plans to call on the British foreign secretary to discuss an appropriate British government response to the Anwar case.

This will go together with an appointment with the Malaysian high commissioner to Britain.

Corbyn is certain that the UK government will make known its views on Anwar either publicly or privately besides the stand that would be taken by the British foreign secretary.

The British MP will also be raising the issue during a forthcoming executive committee meeting of the British chapter of the Inter Parliamentary Union.

The IPU in Britain will be making common cause with other IPUs across the world to forge a common stand on the Anwar issue.

Members of the public and media are welcome to pen their thoughts on the EDM to Corbyn, at corbynj@parliament.uk.

Grover said that his movement will be monitoring the EDM for starters and will lobby MPs to ensure there's 100 percent support in the house for it.

Political manipulation

Unlike Corbyn, Grover did not mince his words and dismissed the Sodomy II charges against

Anwar as "not based on any real evidence but merely political manipulation of criminal legislation and members of the judiciary".

"This is an extreme example of the Malaysian government's attempts to silence the opposition and human rights activists," said Grover.

"The ruling elite are intolerant of any political opposition or advocacy of human rights issues and reform."

Anwar aside, he said that reference can be made to many other cases against other opposition leaders and members in Malaysia.

In all these cases, he added, the basis of the government's action was to manipulate the criminal laws in the country.

The Monitoring Group, Grover disclosed, will hold a public forum in the British Parliament on Anwar after the forthcoming elections which is likely to be held by May.

Members of the local Muslim community, lawyers, MPs, NGOs, academicians, civil society and Malaysians resident in the UK would be among those invited to attend and participate.

Waythamoorthy said he did not see the EDM being initiated by him as being at variance with his publicly announced decision to cut off all links with the opposition Pakatan Rakyat and the PKR.

"Basically, I am a human rights lawyer and advocate," stressed Waythamoorthy.

"What they are doing to Anwar is wrong and I am just chipping in with my little contribution".

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/126957>