



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking at the launch of the Kita Untuk Kita programme at the Kampung Baru Hicom People's Housing Project in Shah Alam, Selangor, yesterday, PIC BY EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN

PREMIER ON THE PARDONS BOARD

'PREMATURE TO COMMENT ON BID'

PM says final decision on Umno's request for a royal pardon for Najib lies with king

HANA NAZ HARUN
SHAH ALAM
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he is part of the Pardons Board reviewing Datuk Seri Najib Razak's application for a royal pardon.

He said there was no conflict of interest with him sitting on the board.

"Although I will be involved in the process, the awarding of medals and pardons is the sole discretion of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"I don't think this should be discussed publicly. There is a process that we must go through.

"I have not seen the process. We have to look at the case... I think it is premature for me to comment now, because I have not seen anything, except Umno's resolution," he said, adding any convict had the right to appeal.

He added that while he did not wish to preclude anyone, the pardons process was very elaborate.

"It has to be followed and finally, the decision depends on the discretion of the king."

Asked how the issue of Najib's pardon would affect the unity government, Anwar said it would not matter, as the process to ask for a royal pardon could be made for anyone.

"But of course we will adhere to rules and conditions."

Meanwhile, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said the party's request for the king to consider granting a full royal pardon to Najib would not harm the party's alliance with Pakatan Harapan (PH) and other components in the unity government.

He said the party decided to make the request to show its appreciation and gratitude to the former prime minister for his nine-year leadership before Barisan Nasional's defeat in the 2018 general election.

"The relationship with PH in the unity government is not an issue. (The matter is) up to the Agong; this is about Umno sending the pardon (request) to the Agong."

It was reported that Umno was appealing to Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah to consider granting a full royal pardon to Najib.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki said the party would submit an appeal to the king to consider granting a royal pardon to Najib soon, per Article 42(1) of the Federal Constitution.

He said the matter was deliberated, decided and agreed upon

when the Umno Supreme Council convened its monthly meeting on Thursday.

He said the council also planned to seek an audience with the king to present a memorandum on the matter.

According to Article 42(5) of the Constitution, the Pardon Board consists of the attorney-general, the chief minister or menteri besar, or the Federal Territories minister, and no more than three members appointed by the king.

Najib, 69, began serving his 12-year prison sentence on Aug 23 last year after he was found guilty of criminal breach of trust, abuse of power and money laundering involving RM42 million in SRC International Sdn Bhd's funds.

He was sentenced to jail by the Kuala Lumpur High Court in July 2020.

His appeals to the Court of Appeal and Federal Court have since been dismissed by 13 judges who agreed with the High Court judge's findings of Najib's guilt.

However, one dissenting judgment by Federal Court judge Datuk Abdul Rahman Sebli has been used by Najib to support his application for a royal pardon.

Rahman, who is the chief judge of Sabah and Sarawak, was a member of a five-panel Federal Court bench that heard Najib's application for a review of the court's decision to dismiss his appeal in the SRC case.

The other four judges found no grounds to free Najib.