

Anwar plans Turkiye trip to support its people

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday that he might be leaving for Turkiye to provide moral support to the people in the country.

Anwar said he would be meeting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to render his support to the Turkish people over the recent earthquake in the country.

"I was asked by the president to be there immediately, to give moral support. (And) I am considering whether I should fly tonight to Turkiye to show our support.

"Several leaders of other countries have arrived in the country, and the president has asked me to personally be there," he said during the Prime Minister's Question and Answer Session

(PMQ) in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Datuk Iskandar Dzulkarnain Abdul Khalid (PN-Kuala Kangsar) had asked on the form of assistance offered by the government to Turkiye and north-west Syria following the earthquake.

Anwar said he had received two calls from Erdogan; first to express his gratitude for assistance rendered by Malaysia and second was to ask him to come to Turkiye.

Anwar said the government had successfully collected funds amounting to RM20 million to be used in humanitarian aid missions in the two affected countries.

"This includes US\$1 million contributed by the federal government and another US\$1 million from the Sultan of Johor Sul-

tan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar."

Anwar said the government had spent RM4 million to send two Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Teams (SMART) for the search-and-rescue mission in Turkiye.

"The cost of deploying the Smart team has been greatly reduced as the flight cost was covered by the Turkish airline.

"Tonight, another team will also be deployed, which includes members of the Malaysian Armed Forces."

He added that the Malaysian team had set up a field hospital in Turkiye. Anwar said, the government would still send assistance to Syria despite sanctions from the United States.

"We have decided that the funds (RM20 million) will also be used to assist Syria along with



Members of the Zeytinburnu Municipality Search-and-Rescue Team comforting each other by the rubble of collapsed buildings in Nurdagi, near Gaziantep, Turkiye, on Monday. AFP PIC

medical equipment, even before a waiver of the sanctions against the country was made by the US.

"During our meeting, we decided to send a team to help as soon as there is a response from the Syrian government."

Anwar said this in response to an additional question from Iskandar Dzulkarnain on the government's stand on Syria, after the US waived sanctions for humanitarian aid for the country for 180 days.