

PM to attend Apec economic leaders' meeting in San Francisco

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has decided to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Economic Leaders' Week (ELW) in San Francisco, the United States, despite calls for him to boycott the meeting.

Speaking at the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly yesterday morning, Anwar said he needed to protect the country's interests in terms of economy, security and diplomatic relations.

"All Asean leaders will be at-

tending, and other Apec member states will also attend.

"We do not agree with the US' stance (on the Palestine-Israel war), but it is our priority to maintain diplomatic relations while not budging from our stand in supporting justice.

"I know this decision will not please all parties, but even so, do not punish me by labelling me as pro-Israel," he said.

Last week, in the Dewan Rakyat, Perikatan Nasional's Machang member of parliament Wan Ah-

mad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad asked Anwar if the government was planning to boycott the Apec ELW meeting as a show of solidarity with Palestine.

Anwar said the government was checking with other Asian countries, including China, before deciding whether to boycott the meeting that starts this Saturday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said he had expressed his views on the matter even during the Asean Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia, in front of US Vice-President Kamala Harris, as well as leaders from China and India.

He said he had raised how Western countries had heavily condemned Russia for its war in Ukraine, saying that they were going against international law, and questioned the inconsistency when it came to Israel.

"Why is there a contradiction when it comes to Israel? I said this to them, not in a harsh tone, but

in a clear, and diplomatic way.

"And I was the only one who voiced this... I'm not trying to show that I am great or brave, but I was speaking from my conscience," he added.

In **Kuala Lumpur**, speaking in the Dewan Rakyat later, Anwar said the government would not recognise any unilateral sanctions or punitive actions taken by a single country, including the US.

He said the government remained firm in its stance of supporting Hamas and would not consider the group a terrorist organisation.

"We do not recognise any unilateral sanctions passed by the US or any other country... we only recognise the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is considered multilateral.

"We also do not agree with the US (on its decision to pass a bill regarding restrictions on foreign entities that support Hamas) and it (the bill) will not influence our

stance or policy," he said, adding that he had also called several leaders from Islamic countries and they had declared the same stance as Malaysia.

Anwar added that the decision to approve the bill had demonstrated the West's ongoing efforts to pressure and intimidate foreign governments or entities that assisted Hamas and the Palestinians.

He also said that Hamas was never classified as a terrorist entity or organisation by the UNSC, despite calls from Western countries to do so.

He said the bill would impact Malaysia only if the US government under the administration of President Joe Biden listed Malaysia as a foreign government that provided financial or relevant material of support to Hamas or the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.

"While Malaysia maintains a strong stance in supporting Palestine, any sanctions against us could also influence the views of the US government towards us, and can potentially affect opportunities for US investments in Malaysia," he said.



Wan Ahmad Fayhsal
Wan Ahmad