

PM: I DID NOT MEDDLE IN ZAHID'S GRAFT CASE

Anwar refutes claims of interference, says he had to respect former A-G's decision on DNAA

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DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday reiterated that he did not issue any instructions to former attorney-general Tan Sri Idrus Harun and interfere in the decision to free Umno president Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi from his 47 corruption charges.

He said as the prime minister, he was aware about the impact that the decision made by the Attorney-General's Chambers (AG-C) would have on the country's political stability, but had to respect Idrus's decision not to leave the responsibility to his successor Datuk Ahmad Terrirudin Mohd Salleh.

Anwar added that if he had the power to delay the court's decision, he could have ordered the release to be made after the Pulau and Simpang Jeram by-elections. Anwar also said that even if he had the power to delay the decision, it was unlikely that he would have done so.

Idrus, he said, did not want to shirk from his responsibility by letting the matter be handled by his successor. He said the A-G was aware that the decision had to be delivered on Sept 4 (Monday), one day before his last day in office.

"He was involved in continuing the prosecution. He then read a leaked document written by the AG-C, which stated that (he) had not agreed to the prosecution.

"Some new facts, as many as 200-pages long were presented. Of course, I, as the prime minister, knew the impact if the accusations were thrown out.

"I had to ask the A-G at length why the decision was like that. Why now?"

Anwar was referring to a leaked document from the AG-C, which described Idrus' stance to oppose the charges at an early stage of the case.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says former attorney-general Tan Sri Idrus Harun did not want to pass down the latter's decision to recommend a discharge not amounting to an acquittal over Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's graft case to his successor.
BERNAMA PIC

On Monday, the High Court granted Zahid a discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) on 12 criminal breach of trust charges, eight counts of bribery and 27 charges for money laundering involving millions of ringgit belonging to Yayasan Akalbudi.

Speaking after prayers at Masjid Jamek Seri Petaling near here yesterday, Anwar said although the judiciary was subjected to prosecution procedures, the judge still possessed some discretion. He said while he understood the concerns raised by many, he urged them to read and understand in entirety the decision by the AG-C when it applied to drop the charges against Zahid.

"As I had repeated before, I can check with the A-G then and now. However, can I check with the chief justice on what case I should intervene in? But when it comes to a certain figure, it's an issue.

"The public has a right to know and the answer lies in reading the verdict in full. But don't slander. Don't say this was the prime minister's directive and so on," he said.

Anwar also reaffirmed the unity government's commitment on the proposal to separate the roles and powers between the A-G and public prosecutor.

Anwar said his government decided to continue with the proposal after coming into power following the 15th General Election.

He however said the government could not bulldoze and immediately execute the separation of powers as it involved cost and required a two-third majority ap-

proval from Parliament.

"We even referred the matter to a Parliamentary Select Committee. Although it involves a huge sum, it has to be done since it will strengthen the roles of the A-G and public prosecutor.

"As such, please do not suggest that it (the separation of roles) has not been decided upon."

Last month, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said said the government would carry out an empirical study on the proposal. She said 19 laws in the Federal Constitution must be amended for it to be implemented.

Anwar, when asked to comment on PKR Youth's call for a special parliamentary sitting to discuss the case, said it wasn't the right platform to do so.

"Parliament is not the courts. We cannot negotiate or discuss court cases within the confines of Parliament. Moreover, we must prevent it from becoming a forum for legal proceedings.

"You can ask questions in Parliament. However, you need to remember that the A-G is neither a member of parliament nor a minister," he said.

The prime minister was also asked to comment on Muda president Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman's threat to withdraw the party's support for the government if the A-GC did not explain in detail its stance on the case.

Anwar said the threat was unfair, adding that in his nine months in power, he had never interfered with the affairs of any enforcement bodies and the judiciary, which he described as the pillars of good governance.