

PKR plans 100,000-strong rally for Sodomy II verdict
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By Shannon Teoh

PETALING JAYA, Jan 3 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) said today it will gather 100,000 people on Monday to support Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim when the Kuala Lumpur High Court decides if the opposition leader is guilty of sodomy.

PKR deputy president Azmin Ali told reporters today the opposition pact had agreed to mobilise and gather at the Duta Court Complex despite police warnings against any public rally when the court rules in Anwar's two-year-long trial.

"The system is so rotten, we have to expect the worst-case scenario," the Gombak MP said. "Along with PAS and DAP, we will gather 100,000 people at the court to show our support to the cause fought by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim."

He also warned that public rallies would continue until the next general election if the former deputy prime minister was found guilty.

"We will continue. The same night we have a programme in Penang. If he is acquitted, then Anwar will celebrate in his home state. If not, we will go to Penang and continue our demands," he said.

Selangor PAS chief Dr Rani Osman also said the Islamist party had called on all divisions to mobilise and "even those in Sabah and Sarawak want to join".

Anwar is accused of sodomising a former aide, a charge that he has vehemently denied, saying that it is part of a ploy to destroy his political career.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court heard closing submissions from December 8 to 15 and will deliver its verdict on Monday, ahead of a general election that must be called by early 2013.

The PKR de facto leader's hopes of becoming prime minister will likely be quashed if found guilty of the offence, which carries a maximum jail term of 20 years.

Azmin called the sodomy charge "an insidious conspiracy" but insisted today it "will not derail PR's plan and resolve to form the next federal government."

"What we have discussed, we will continue whatever the decision or whether or not bail is given. It is not seasonal. We will continue until the general election," he added.

Anwar was first sentenced to nine years' jail in 2000 but the Federal Court overturned the sodomy conviction in 2004, allowing him to campaign ahead of Election 2008.

The landmark elections saw an opposition electoral pact deny Barisan Nasional its customary two-thirds majority in Parliament and the loss of five state governments.

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