

Anwar Ibrahim Denies Involvement In 'Project IC'
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KOTA KINABALU, Sept 19 (Bernama) -- Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has denied involvement in the so-called 'Project IC' in Sabah during his time as member of the federal cabinet, including when he was deputy prime minister until his sacking in 1998.

In fact, he told the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on Illegal Immigrants in Sabah, he did not even know that it was dubbed 'Project IC', but had heard there was a special task force which dealt with the admission of foreigners and gave them identity cards (ICs) in the state.

"Given my career as a cabinet member and even as the deputy prime minister, I was never invited to attend the National Security Council meetings or any briefings on the special task force, nor had there ever been a report presented to the cabinet.

"Even during my time as acting prime minister I was never briefed or attended meetings or signed any file concerning the matter," he said.

Anwar, who is Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) defacto leader, described the special task force as a "secretive operation", and believed the operation was ongoing and that the task force had never disbanded.

Asked by RCI chairman Tan Sri Steve Shim Lip Kiong if he agreed that Malaysia's system on the issuance of citizenship was weak, Anwar disagreed.

Asked by conducting officer Manoj Kurup on his suggestions to rectify the problem, including his thoughts on suggestions to recall and re-issue ICs or risk deportation, he said it was a good idea.

Anwar, who was the 210th witness, said the government had every right to withdraw ICs given to foreigners.

"We don't necessarily have to confer them citizenship, but perhaps, place them in different categories (to differentiate them from genuine Malaysians) in order for them to remain in the country," he added. The inquiry continues tomorrow.

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