

WSJ taking sides in Malaysian politics, says Anifah
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Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman has accused The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) of taking sides in Malaysian politics, after the business paper published a commentary by jailed PKR de facto chief Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on its website.

In an open letter to WSJ today, Anifah criticised it for giving Anwar the "platform to raise false and politically motivated allegations" against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the government.

"It is a pity that the WSJ has fallen for desperate, unfounded allegations by a politician and presented them as facts – thereby taking sides in internal Malaysian politics," Anifah said.

He said that WSJ deliberately failed to mention the less savoury aspect of Anwar's history, such as his corruption conviction in 1999 and his "documented history of rabble-rousing and extremism, as well as spouting of anti-Semitic remarks".

He added that the points raised by Anwar in the commentary published on WSJ's website were off the mark and misleading.

"The Wall Street Journal takes aim at Malaysia, but once again displays a woeful lack of knowledge and understanding of our country and its history," Anifah said.

He added that Anwar was wrong to claim that the "voices of dissent" were being silenced, and invited the public to witness the freedom to criticise the government in Malaysia's online news sites.

Anifah added that Anwar's criticism of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) was baseless, and said Anwar had failed to mention that it states that no person can be arrested or detained under the act solely for their political belief or party.

"Pota in fact further secures the liberties of Malaysians: both their freedom to speak out, and their freedom from extremists who pose a real threat to the country.

"Anwar may not take this threat seriously, but the Malaysian government does," wrote Anifah.

He said that Najib's introduction of the 1Malaysia policy disproves Anwar's claim that the prime minister was "sowing communal and religious animosity".

"This is the greatest attempt in Malaysia's history to forge a national identity that includes all races and religions, and the prime minister regularly attends the festivals of non-Muslims, going to churches and temples to share the celebrations of fellow Malaysians," said Anifah.

He added that Anwar's warning that Malaysia may evolve into a failed state would be "laughable", if it were not for the fact that some took the former opposition leader seriously.

"Here is what some other people have said about Malaysia recently: Bloomberg rated Malaysia as the world's 5th most promising emerging market in 2015; the IMF's latest report on our country was titled: 'Favorable Prospects for Malaysia's Diversified Economy'; a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations wrote: 'Malaysian political discourse is becoming far more open than it was even a decade ago'; and the ratings agency Fitch recently upgraded the outlook for Malaysia.

"This is the truth about Malaysia today," Anifah said.

In his commentary on Friday titled "Malaysia's Growing Opposition Can't Be Silenced", Anwar had explained why he had chosen to serve out his five-year prison sentence in Malaysia, rather than seek refuge abroad.

He said that the country was ready for change, and that young Malaysians were committed to building an inclusive, democratic and economically vibrant country.

Anwar took aim at the country's electoral system, the government's corruption and racial and religious extremism, Pota, the Sedition Act, and 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

He also warned of Malaysia ending up as a failed state after decades of economic mismanagement. – July 26, 2015

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