

Zahid Informs Two UK Leaders Anwar Allowed To Bring In Foreign Specialists

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By Ahmad Fuad Yahya

LONDON, Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said he has informed two United Kingdom (UK) government leaders that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is treated locally for his health problems besides being allowed to bring in foreign medical specialists to treat him in Malaysia.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the explanation was given to UK Home Secretary, Theresa May and Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hugo Swire who asked about the medical treatment to the former leader of Malaysia's opposition during his meetings with them separately here on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Ahmad Zahid, who concluded his four-day visit to the UK on Wednesday, said the two leaders asked the question in relation to a letter sent by UK Prime Minister David Cameron UK to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak enquiring about the treatment given to Anwar, who is currently serving time in Sungai Buloh jail.

At that meeting he had also explained to them that Najib also received a letter from the president of Georgetown University who attached two letters, from United States Secretary of State John Kerry and US security adviser Susan Rice on the same question.

"Obviously this question has some connection with the assumption that as if Anwar is not given any proper service, particularly in terms of medical treatment provided and should be given," he said.

"I have expressed on behalf of the Government and the Department of Prisons Malaysia that Anwar has been given proper treatment, including the decision by the (Prisons) department to allow a group of medical experts from Georgetown University, USA, to come to Malaysia to conduct treatment and surgical procedures for the illness suffered by Anwar," he told a press conference with Malaysian journalists here.

The Deputy Prime Minister also briefed the two leaders in the UK that medical experts from abroad were allowed to be brought in and treat Anwar in any government hospitals and they also could bring groups of specialists, including medical assistants needed according to the health problems suffered by Anwar.

Earlier reports said that Anwar suffers from chronic shoulder injury.

Anwar, said Ahmad Zahid is warded at the Sungai Buloh Prison and was given medical treatment in prison as well as specialist treatment in Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL) and University Malaya Medical Centre.

The explanation given by him, he said, surprised both the UK leaders probably due to the impression given to them previously that Anwar were not given any treatment by medical specialists or doctors in Malaysia.

Ahmad Zahid called on all parties not to misinterpret the explanation that Anwar was given special treatment by the Prisons Department but it was only due to the need for treatment by a specialist.

He said the fact that all parties should be aware of was that there were medical specialists in the same field in Malaysia and there was no need for doctors from abroad to provide treatment to Anwar.

"But because the Prison Department felt that it was to give the picture to the international community that we provide this based on humanitarian grounds, then the decision should be accepted by all parties with tolerance and open-mind and not as giving any privileges to Anwar.

"I hope that his family accept the decision of the Prisons Department with an open mind because some questions have been made in the Dewan Rakyat sitting, especially the debates on the budget which touched on the responsibility of the Home Ministry," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said the Cabinet was informed there were almost 200 visits while Anwar was in jail or by medical specialists and doctors, while lawyers handled 16 of Anwar's cases that are still ongoing in court besides meeting with family members either prison or hospital while receiving treatment.

The authorities, however, could not meet the request of some international NGOs leaders and international political leaders to meet with Anwar as the legislative, Prisons Act and existing legal procedures and a person in custody is not supposed to get any privileges because he was known to many, he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister hoped that his explanation as to the question he received when he visited the United States last October would give the picture to the international community that the sentence imposed on Anwar was not due to a political offence and he is not a political detainee.

Anwar went through the legislative process which was not a decision by the government but the court's decision in accordance with the judicial system in Malaysia and it had nothing to do with any so-called interference from the government in the trial concerned, he said.

Ahmad Zahid said the explanation he gave was in the knowledge of all members of the Cabinet and it was presented as a report from the Prison Department to the Cabinet.

"I hope this issue is not polemicise either by the opposition or any party to make an issue because the offence and legal process have been conducted and the Prisons Department has carried out its duty as provided by the law and prison regulations," he added.

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