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Abdullah: I didn't order police to charge him

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KUALA LUMPUR: The prime minister said he did not instruct the police to charge de facto opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim with sodomy.

"How could I insist that he be charged? The police are not stupid to charge just because so and so might have said something to that effect," said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"And I am not one to ask people to charge. If you have something to charge, if you have evidence to charge, you charge. If you don't have, drop it. That's what I said," he said after chairing the BN supreme council meeting yesterday.

Abdullah said the case was going to court as the authorities had decided they had a case against Anwar. He said it was up to the police to decide, on the basis of investigations already carried out, whether there was enough evidence for them to prefer charges.

"If they think there is enough evidence to charge, they will have to charge," he said while

stating that Home Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar had told him about the police decision to charge Anwar today.

Abdullah said people should not forget there was another party in the case — the complainant, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

"Another person looking for justice is the victim. You seem to forget Saiful. You think Anwar is more important.

"This is an issue of law. Somebody feels that he needs justice and he makes a report to the police. And the police, therefore, have a duty to conduct investigations, to question him, to invite others to assist in the investigations.

"If there is nothing, no evidence whatsoever, drop the charge. Drop the whole thing, the investigation. Don't do it. If there is evidence to charge, they have to charge. You can't stop them from doing that. They have to think of Saiful."

Abdullah also replied to a claim by Anwar that he had planned for Anwar to be charged today to deflect attention from the problems the government was facing.

"Why should I try to deflect

from the problems of the government? They are huge problems.

"This (issue) is not going to deflect the kind of problems that we are facing at the moment."

He called on Anwar to prove his innocence in court and ruled out the possibility of street demonstrations similar to the last time Anwar was arrested in 1998.

"Why should there be demonstrations? Anwar should tell them (his supporters) there is no need to demonstrate — 'I (Anwar) am going there (the court). I am going to face them. I am going to show them this is all nonsense' — that's what he (Anwar) should do.

"Not resort to demonstrations to stop the process of law," he said.

To another claim by Anwar that the charge was being made out against him to sabotage his by-election campaign, Abdullah said: "We (the BN) did not announce (the election date). Neither did I ask for it to coincide this way."

Abdullah said that if the Election Commission did not announce a date anytime soon, Anwar would be making another

allegation against the government.

He said if the commission did not call the by-election within 60 days, Anwar would then ask why it was being delayed. "There will always be something (*ada saja*)."

Abdullah noted that Anwar's sodomy investigation had been going on for some time.

He said some had claimed that Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail had resigned so that the authorities would not charge Anwar with sodomy.

"There are some people who say this. There is never one version of the story. There are at least two versions. Sometimes three, four, five or 10 versions."

Home Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar also denied that the government was attempting to derail Anwar's plans to contest the Permatang Pau by-election.

"He should see this as an opportunity to clear his name in court. I ask everyone not to politicise the case or debate it any more as this would be sub judice," he said at the closing of the police force's Quran reading competition at the Police College in Cheras.