

UNITED NATIONS RULES MALAYSIAN OPPOSITION LEADER ANWAR IBRAHIM HELD ILLEGALLY, CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kuala Lumpur – Today, the legal team of Anwar Ibrahim released the Opinion No. 22/2015 of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, finding unanimously that Anwar is being held illegally and in violation of international law:

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention renders the following opinion:
The deprivation of liberty of Mr. Ibrahim is arbitrary . . . taking into account all the circumstances of the case, the Working Group considers that the adequate remedy would be to release Mr. Ibrahim immediately, and ensure that his political rights that were removed based on his arbitrary detention be reinstated.

“I am deeply grateful that the United Nations has called for Anwar’s release,” said Nurul Izzah Anwar MP, his daughter. “Its strong stance in solidarity with my father sends a clear and unequivocal message to Prime Minister Najib Razak, and ensures that the sharp decline in human rights under his administration will not go unnoticed,” she added.

The Working Group is a five-member independent and impartial body appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, and is currently comprised of experts from Australia, Benin, Mexico, South Korea, and Ukraine. It is mandated to consider and render opinions about alleged cases of arbitrary detention. The Government of Malaysia held a seat on the UN Human Rights Council from 2006-2009, and 2010-2013. It must abide by this opinion and its recommendations.

Anwar, the former opposition leader and a former Deputy Prime Minister, is imprisoned because he presents a democratic threat to Prime Minister Najib Razak and the ruling UMNO party. Anwar led a diverse opposition coalition, cutting across race and religion to win 52 percent of the popular vote amongst Malaysians in the country’s most recent elections. Anwar has been in increasing pain throughout his detention, which began in February 2015, because of a serious muscle tear in his right shoulder. Despite the urgent need for medical treatment, Dr. Jeyaindran Tan Sinnadurai has repeatedly denied Anwar access to doctors of his choosing, timely access to necessary medical testing, and recommended weekly rehabilitation. As a result, his shoulder injury has been exacerbated and he requires major surgery that is not available in Malaysia. The surgery that has been offered would merely reduce his pain but leave him unable to use his shoulder and result in osteoarthritis.

The Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, International Parliamentary Union, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and world leaders such as former President B.J. Habibie of Indonesia, former President Abdullah Gü'l of Turkey, and former Vice President Al Gore of the U.S., among others, have all urged his unconditional release.

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