

MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER NAJIB RAJAK FLOUTS UN DECISION DEMANDING RELEASE OF ANWAR IBRAHIM; RENEGS ON COMMITMENTS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA TO PRESERVE HIS HEALTH

Government of Malaysia refuses to provide physical therapy three times weekly for serious shoulder injury against recommendations of doctors and arbitrarily limits access to counsel.

Kuala Lumpur – Today, the family of imprisoned former Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim renewed its call for Prime Minister Najib Razak to free him.

“On behalf of my family, I urge Prime Minister Najib to release my father and let him travel abroad for medical treatment on humanitarian grounds,” said Nurul Izzah Anwar MP, his daughter. On September 1, 2015, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention urged his “release . . . immediately.” 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. In their meeting on November 20, 2015, President Obama also urged Prime Minister Najib to release Anwar on humanitarian grounds. In addition to discuss his prospective release, President Obama reportedly requested and Prime Minister Najib agreed to ensure Anwar be provided all appropriate medical care for his serious shoulder muscle tear.

In a flagrant violation of these commitments, Dr. Jeyaindran Sinnadurai, Deputy Director-General of Health, has decreed that Anwar will only be provided physical therapy once every two weeks, despite his being in ongoing and serious pain. It is worth recalling that Dr. Jeyaindran is Najib’s personal physician and was the chief prosecution witness against Anwar at his trial.

Previously Malaysian government doctors had recommended Anwar receive treatment 1-3 times a week; in prior hospitalizations he was provided daily treatment, which resulted in tremendous pain relief. And Anwar’s personal physician has recommended therapy three times weekly because it both ameliorates pain and prevents further muscle deterioration. Instead the Government has provided been providing him treatment once every two weeks, which has been substandard, ineffective in treating Anwar’s pain, and highlights the failure of the Prime Minister to honor his promise to give Anwar the care he needs. “The denial of adequate medical care violates Malaysia’s customary international law obligation to refrain from committing acts of torture or other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment,” observed Jared Genser, Anwar’s international counsel.

In addition to denying Anwar’s urgent need for regular therapy, the Government has also acted arbitrarily and illegally to limit Anwar’s access to counsel. Since mid-October, Anwar is now only allowed to see his lawyers once a week for one hour. This has had a dramatically negative effect on his rights because there are currently 16 legal actions involving numerous lawyers in which Anwar is engaged relating to various aspects of his advocacy against the Government. Sivarasa Rasiah, Anwar’s domestic counsel, noted “This arbitrary decision is a

flagrant violation of Malaysian law, which provides no limits on access to counsel, and it must be immediately reversed.”

Contact: Sivarasa Rasiah
sivarasa.rasiah@gmail.com
+60 122 13 8613

Jared Genser
jgenser@perseus-strategies.com
+1 202 320 4135