

Public Statement

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Malaysia: Anwar Ibrahim's right to medical treatment of his choice

Amnesty International believes that the criminal charges filed against former deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim were politically-motivated and that his trials did not meet international standards of fairness. Recognising Anwar Ibrahim as a prisoner of conscience detained for the peaceful expression of his political beliefs, the organisation once again appeals for his immediate and unconditional release.

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that whilst in custody Anwar Ibrahim's spinal injury has not responded to treatment and that his health continues to deteriorate. Independent medical experts have recommended that Anwar Ibrahim now undergo endoscopic microsurgery, and have advised that the best prognosis for recovery would be for the operation to be conducted at a specialised spinal surgery available outside Malaysia.

In May 2001 the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) asserted Anwar Ibrahim's right as a patient to make an informed choice about which medical treatment he wishes to undergo and, noting that there were no relevant prohibitions under Malaysian law, called for him to be allowed to travel abroad to receive the recommended specialised medical treatment.

With fears mounting of a further deterioration in Anwar Ibrahim's health, Amnesty International appeals to the Malaysian authorities to accept Suhakam's recommendation and to immediately allow Anwar Ibrahim to exercise without restriction his right to seek medical

treatment of his choice in accordance with the recommendations of his medical advisors.

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