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Blatant Abuse of Powers by Police in the Arrest of Anwar Ibrahim

Suaram strongly condemns the abuse of powers by the police in the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim yesterday. Despite the agreement from Anwar Ibrahim to turn up voluntarily at the police station at 2.00pm for the investigation on the sodomy allegations against him by his former aide and the ultimatum of 2.00pm given by the police themselves, the police chose to make the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim at his house at 1.00pm with the deployment of the special police squad in balaclava-mask and leather suit. Anwar Ibrahim was reportedly brought away in a 4 wheel-drive car escorted by 15 police patrol cars.

The way the arrest was made is a blatant abuse of powers, unprofessional and an excessive show of force by the police especially since Anwar Ibrahim had agreed to cooperate with the police and be present at the police station for investigation. Clearly, the police had gone against their own promise that they will make the arrest if Anwar Ibrahim did not turn up at 2.00pm yesterday. The arrest was clearly made in bad faith to intimidate Anwar Ibrahim, his family and his supporters.

Suaram welcomes the release of Anwar Ibrahim on bail today without charge. We however strongly question the necessity for the police to arrest him in the first place and detained him overnight. The investigation can be easily done during office hours of the police especially with the cooperation already pledged by Anwar Ibrahim. Even if the police decided to charge Anwar Ibrahim, he can be summoned to court and face the charges. The arrest and detention overnight was totally unnecessary and tantamount to abuse of powers especially Anwar Ibrahim had just participated in the live telecast nationwide in the debate on the oil price hike with the Information Minister the night before and showing no sign of intention to escape anywhere.

Why to this date the police have failed to provide the lawyers of Anwar Ibrahim a copy of the police report of his former aide Saiful Burkhari who alleged that he was sodomised by Anwar Ibrahim? Is this the reason for the police not to charge Anwar now to avoid Anwar's lawyers from having access to the police report of Saiful?

The police arrest raises further doubts on the impartiality of the police whether the police force is now being used by certain quarters with political motivations to gather travel information from Anwar before the police report of Saiful, which will reveal the time and place of the alleged sodomy, is made available to the lawyers of Anwar.

The police credibility is once again put in test. The unprofessional treatment and abuse of powers by the police in the arrest and investigation of Anwar Ibrahim only further illustrates the urgent need for the establishment of the Independent Police Complaint and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) if the Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the police force were to regain public confidence in them.

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Executive Director