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Constitutional Court chief justice Anwar Usman will tie the knot with Idayati, the younger sister of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, prompting a public debate over whether Anwar should step down to maintain the credibility and integrity of one of the country's most powerful institutions.

Idayati, a 55-year-old mother of three, confirmed the news to Antara on Monday, saying the marriage ceremony would be held on May 26 this year in Surakarta, Central Java, and May 28 in Anwar's hometown Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara.

"[We were] introduced by a friend back in October," Idayati said.

Gibran Rakabuming Raka, Jokowi's eldest son who followed his father's footsteps into politics and rose to become the mayor of Surakarta, revealed on Monday that the engagement took place on March 12 and was attended by his father, according to local media reports.

While many have argued that any marriage is a private matter, Anwar and Idayati's wedding plan has sparked a public debate over whether Anwar should resign from his office to avoid any

potential conflicts of interest and biased practices in the court.

Anwar is a two-time justice appointed by the Supreme Court, who had his tenure extended from 2021 to 2026 following a September 2020 amendment to the Constitutional Court Law that increases the justice term from two five-year terms to 15 years. He has served as the chief justice since 2018.

Constitutional law expert Feri Amsari from Andalas University believes the 65-year-old chief justice should step down as the matrimonial relationship would cast doubt over the court's decisions in the future, eroding public trust in the country's judiciary.

"This potential conflict of interest must be avoided by the chief justice so that the court is able to maintain its dignity. It is important for us to have a Constitutional Court that is obedient to the judicial values and free from all power relations," Feri said.

This is particularly pertinent as the court is currently handling judicial reviews filed by various groups over alleged violations of the Constitution committed by policymakers – the government and the House of Representatives. This includes an ongoing review of the New Capital Law, which was passed hastily in Janu-

ary as the legal basis for the ambitious construction of the new capital city Nusantara in East Kalimantan. Petitioners in the case argue that the deliberation denied public participation.

Nusantara is widely seen as a legacy-building project for Jokowi and is closely associated with his desire to lay out a bold vision of Indonesia that is modern, smart and sustainable.

Achmad Nur Hidayat, the founder of public policy think tank Narasi Institute, who is among a group of academics and public figures challenging the law, said Anwar should resign because his opinions, not only court rulings, and particularly in the capital relocation case, would inevitably be questioned.

"These things will raise questions about the integrity of the court chief justice in making decisions," Achmad said in a statement.

But Arsul Sani, a member of House Commission III, which oversees legal affairs, from the progovernment United Development Party (PPP), said Anwar's resignation was not necessary and that concerns over conflicts of interest should be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Arsul suggested that the court could make an arrangement so that the chief justice did not take

part in cases involving laws that were initiated or drafted by the President or his office.

"If judicial reviews are carried out over laws that don't involve the President or the presidential institution, then there is no need for [the justice] to be inactive, let alone resign," Arsul said.

"So for me, asking the chief justice to resign just because he is going to marry the President's sister is excessive."

Sari Yulianti, Commission III member from Golkar Party, also a progovernment party, said the independence of the judiciary could still be maintained because the court's rulings were made collectively by the nine-justice bench and did not depend solely on who was holding the chief justice seat.

Legal expert Fajri Nursyamsi from the Indonesia Center for Law and Policy Studies (PSHK) said a case-by-case approach could not be applied because the nine justices shared almost the same duties in deciding cases. He said that each judge must hold independence and be responsible for their own opinions and decisions.

Court spokesperson Fajar Laksono declined to comment but said Anwar himself would soon issue a statement.

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