

**Don't fear Himpun, minister Jamil Khir tells PAS**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**October 19, 2011**  
**By Salhan K Ahmad & S Pathmawathy**

PAS does not have to be concerned about the anti-apostasy rally (Himpun) fanning religious tension, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom said today, adding that the gathering will be held in a confined location.

NONEHe told reporters at the Parliament lobby that Himpun organisers have obtained permission to host the rally in the Shah Alam Stadium and that would ensure that there are no untoward incidents.

"I think the organisers themselves have undertaken to maintain order... when there is a permit, there are regulations that must be abided with.

"When a rally is held in a stadium, there are less problems," said Jamil (right), who is in charge of Islamic affairs.

Defending Himpun's cause to "defend Islam for the sake of the umat (followers)", the minister said the organisers had to ensure the event would be held smoothly.

"Therefore, this is different from the nature of an angry demonstration," Jamil added.

'Event to gauge unity among Muslims'

According to Himpun's website, the main objective of the event is to "gauge the unity among Muslims, particularly against the Christianising efforts on Aug 3".

This is a reference to a search by the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais), conducted at a hall in the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) compound following a tip-off that proselytising efforts were being carried out by a welfare group.

Non-governmental organisation Harapan Komuniti was at that time using the premises to hold a thanksgiving dinner, which was gate-crashed by Jais.

A probe conducted by Jais later revealed that the event was attended by 12 Muslims and the department allegedly found evidence of attempts to subvert Muslims.

The website lists 25 NGOs as having pledged support for the gathering, but media reports say it will be attended by 1,000 Muslim NGOs.

PAS, the only Islamist party in the country, has decided to stay out of the rally as a sign of respect to the organisers, who had said their event would not involve political parties.

Prior to this, PAS had suspected that its political rival, Umno, was backing the rally and feared that it might instigate "religious tension".

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