

PKR to follow PAS' lead in not joining Himpun rally
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After deliberating on the matter, PKR has decided to stay out of the planned anti-apostasy rally to be held in Shah Alam on Saturday.

NONEDe facto leader Anwar Ibrahim told a press conference in Parliament House today that this was decided after he had received and considered input and further details from PAS and other parties.

"We don't want (to be) in a gathering that may be manipulated to cause conflict between religions and races," he explained.

He stressed that, despite declining to join the event, PKR stands by the general principles of strengthening the Muslim congregation and propagating the faith.

Insisting that participating in the rally and true dakwah (propagation of the faith) are two different issues, Anwar said there are other more fundamental issues to the faith that must be looked into - such as dealing with corruption, social ills and abuse of power.

Anwar argued that as long as this is not done, those who call themselves defenders of the faith may not, in fact, be close to Islam.

Umno behind rally?

He also claimed that there are indications that political rivals Umno may be behind the movement.

azlan"We will not be involved in this gathering ... especially because of worries and suspicions that there may be chicanery to cause tensions as well as the possibility that it is being manipulated by Umno," stressed Anwar.

He said there are "compelling facts and evidence" to suggest that Umno is behind the movement, citing "how the Umno media (is) playing it, how quick it is in getting the permit and the personalities involved".

Asked if disciplinary action will be taken against PKR members who do attend, Anwar said that there is no need to do so as they are not like Umno, and they need to give their members "the space".

He explained that the ban on members' attendance comes as advice rather than a directive to avoid the event.