

## **DPM dismisses Seksualiti Merdeka as 'a waste of time'**

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**by Nigel Aw**

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin today dismissed Seksualiti Merdeka, which advocates the rights of sexual minorities, as a waste of time.

"Actions that do not benefit the majority in society should not be done, it is a waste of time," he told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

Acknowledging that such gatherings were part of international human rights standards, Muhyiddin said: "That is their right, let them be. But we need to evaluate."

Malaysia still had laws and norms of its own on the matter, he said, and Seksualiti Merdeka must understand its limits.

"Even though we accept human rights... but Malaysia has laws, religion and cultural values (so) when someone says this is normal in human rights, there is still limits to consider..."

"For example, we have laws against sodomy," he added.

Political agenda behind Seksualiti Merdeka?

Describing the festival as inconsistent with Islam and an immoral activity, Muhyiddin questioned the motive of the organisers.

"I don't understand why they want to promote it this way... is there a hidden political agenda? Malaysians can evaluate on their own."

The comments come following vociferous condemnation of Seksualiti Merdeka by conservative and religious groups, including Perkasa, the Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs and PAS Youth.

Seksualiti Merdeka is an annual festival celebrating the human rights of people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, organised by a loose coalition of NGOs, artistes, activists and individuals since 2008.

The festival's programme, which includes forums, talks, workshops, book launches, an art exhibition and stage performances, will run from Nov 9 to 13 and is expected to be officially launched by Bersih 2.0 chief Ambiga Sreenevasan.

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