

## **Don't support Seksualiti Merdeka, Muslims told**

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Selangor Islamic affairs exco Hasan Mohd Ali urged various parties to withdraw their support for Seksualiti Merdeka.

He claimed that all religions, including Islam, forbids lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual activities.

Hasan was speaking to reporters after officiating a seminar on alternative medicine.

Hasan also believes that Elton John's concert in Genting Highlands on Nov 22 would "add fuel to fire". Therefore it is PAS Youth's right to protest, he added.

Fans should get by with just listening to the openly gay entertainer's music on his CDs, he suggested further.

On another matter, a coalition of Muslim groups and PAS' Youth wing have announced that they are organizing demonstrations after Friday prayers tomorrow against the Seksualiti Merdeka festival advocating equal rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender community.

The Pembela coalition said they will be demonstrating at the Shah Alam Mosque, while PAS Youth announced they will hold a protest at Kampung Baru mosque in Kuala Lumpur.

Later this evening, the party's youth wing however cancelled the protest after the police announced its ban of the festival. Deputy inspector general of police Khalid Abu Bakar earlier announced a ban on the festival.

### **'Haram' for Muslims**

Islamic NGO Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (Isma), meanwhile, declared that its ulama council has declared Seksualiti Merdeka as a haram (forbidden) event for Muslims to be involved in.

Isma urged the authorities to be vigilant of "perverse activities" and prevent such activities from influencing Muslims and eroding the identity and self-esteem of Malaysia and its people.

Isma president Aznan Hasan said that although Islam recognizes human rights, it should be within the

boundaries of religious principles, moral values, culture, ethics, and courtesy.

"Islam is a religion that gives justice and equal freedoms to all genders, but that freedom and justice should be based on religious principles.

"It is not based on logic alone, but should be driven by (the religious ) scripture.

"Therefore, freedom is not absolute, but should be based on universal justice to serve the public's interest, and prevent any harm to their lives," he said.

Aznan criticised the LGBT 'lifestyle' as a "Western invention" that contradicts the norms of Malaysian society.

Seksualiti Merdeka has been held annually since 2008. It was slated to include talks, workshops and film screenings to help Malaysians understand sexual minorities.

Its co-founder Pang Khee Teik had clarified that the program's purpose is not to support homosexual activity.

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