

DAP 'plan' to erode Malay dominance is nonsense
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Police questioned former Bar Council chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan for up to half-an-hour today over her involvement in the Seksualiti Merdeka 2011 programme.

Four officers from Brickfields police station went to Tenaganita's office in Petaling Jaya at 4.05pm, where Ambiga was present, to take her statement.

The Bersih 2.0 chairperson had been invited to officiate the programme, originally scheduled from Nov 9 to 13.

Present at the office were Tenaganita executive director Irene Fernandez (above, in red), Maria Chin Abdullah and one of the Seksualiti Merdeka organisers, Pang Khee Teik.

"Have we no shame in this country (to persecute the LGBT community)? Please show some caring for them," Ambiga (left in photo, with Marina) told the media.

She also urged the mainstream media to report accurately on the issue.

Marina officiated event two years ago

Pang (photo below) said he handed over a letter for Inspector-General of Police Ismail Omar after his statement was recorded.

Pang Khee Teik seksualiti merdeka coordinator "We're seeking an audience with the IGP to clarify our objectives and to explain that we're not doing what the media claims we are," Pang said.

Marina, in expressing her support for Seksualiti Merdeka, said the festival was aimed at defending fundamental human rights.

"Two years ago I officiated at this event, without any problem. It only seeks to educate the marginalised community about their legal rights," Bernama quoted Marina as saying.

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.

The festival programme includes forums, talks, workshops, book launches, an art exhibition and stage performances.

Meant to educate the LGBT community about its rights, the festival had been organised annually since 2008 without incident until now, its fourth instalment.

To live and love without fear

This year's theme was to be 'Queer Without Fear', to "...highlight how homophobia and transphobia have negatively affected and continue to affect the lives of untold numbers of Malaysians who are discriminated against, and persecuted", because of their sexual orientations and gender identities.

It is our firm belief that all Malaysians have the right to live and love without fear," say the organisers on the event website.

However, due to a sudden uproar against the event whipped up by certain Malay and Islamic NGOs, police banned the event and the organisers have since cancelled the week-long programme.

Arguing that sexual minorities are citizens too and have rights, just as any other Malaysian, Seksualiti Merdeka organisers have, in an earlier statement, said: "The false allegations and ill-intended remarks made to incite hatred against us are completely unjustified.

"They have further marginalised a group of Malaysians who have long suffered severe marginalisation in society."

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