

PKR: Umno rally for refinery oiled by outsiders
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Following the rally last Sunday that saw 200 residents of Pengerang, Johor, stand up against a massive oil refinery, Umno on Thursday retaliated by gathering 250 people to stage a counter-rally to support the mega project.

NONEPKR leaders who have published footage of the rally however claim that most of the participants were outsiders brought in by Umno.

According to Chinese newspaper Sin Chew Daily, the counter-rally was jointly held by local Umno and MIC leaders at Teluk Empang.

The Umno rally was attended mostly by Malay folks and several Indians, but a total absence of any Chinese, a stark contrast to the earlier protest rally that saw Chinese villagers from the affected areas out in numbers.

Pro petronas pengerang rallyThe Youtube footage of the pro-refinery rally showed some Malay women at the rally admitting that they are from the Adela Felda settlement, which is some 15km away from the Pengerang coastal area affected by the project.

The 'protestors' unfurled posters and banners to support the oil refinery project, one reading, "We are willing to migrate for development."

Several express buses and a van bearing the image of Pengerang MP Azalina Othman Said were also visible in the footage.

'Protestors' by busloads

Pengerang PKR division secretary Taufik Tahir who recorded the footage, told Malaysiakini that those participants were outsiders brought in by Azalina.

S Pro petronas pengerang rallyHe claimed that Azalina had called on local villagers to attend the rally but the response was lukewarm, therefore she resorted to hiring four buses to carry in outsiders.

However, when contacted by Malaysiakini, Pengerang Umno deputy youth chief Abdul Hadi Sydee insisted that only 50 to 60 participants were outsiders and the remaining were all locals.

Pro petronas pengerang rallyThe construction of the country's largest integrated refinery and petrochemicals complex, dubbed the Refinery and Petrochemicals Integrated Development Project (Rapid), is currently underway at Pengerang's waterfront.

The Petronas mega project will acquire some 22,500 acres of land, affecting up to 15 villages in the coastal Pengerang.

Some 3,000 residents living in about 1,000 houses in the area will be required to move out of their homes during the first phase of the development.

The project is also feared to affect the fishing grounds and hence the local livelihood.

NONEThis has prompted roughly 200 residents to stage their first large-scale protest last Sunday (left).

Azalina on Wednesday however claimed in Parliament that there were foreigners among the protesters, and that the rally was not reflective of the views of the 70,000 residents in her constituency.

The Pengerang Residents Action Committee later rebutted Azalina's claim, saying that a survey conducted last November in seven affected villages showed that 96 percent of the villagers opposed the project.

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