

Activists decry Lynas' 'bully tactics'

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Activists and NGOs who were recently served a letter of demand by Australia's Lynas Corporation have vowed to stand firm against the company's plans to set up a rare earth refinery in Pahang.

The activists and 45 NGOs have dubbed the legal threat as a form of "intimidation tactics" by a major company which would spur their protest further.

NONE "We have a moral duty and social responsibility to right the wrongs that have been dealt by Lynas upon our shore through its rare earth refinery project and we will stand firm and united to stop it," they said in a joint statement today.

On April 8, Lynas issued the letter of demand to leaders of the Save Malaysia Stop Lynas (SMSL) and 45 NGOs, who are signatories of an open letter to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, dated March 31.

Lynas claimed that the content of the letter had damaged the company's reputation and caused loss of goodwill.

Respect freedom of speech

The joint statement by the activists and NGOs reads that Lynas was taking advantage of Malaysia's broad defamation laws to stifle dissent.

"If Lynas is genuine and sincere in its claim that it is following international standard, it would have respected the basic democratic rights of Malaysians to free speech especially when public interest is at stake in this case.

"Instead Lynas Corporation seems to be trying to silence the truth by flexing its muscle with its power, money and expensive lawyers," read the statement.

Lynas Corporation is seeking to build a rare earth refinery that would process ore mined from Western Australia.

Locals are protesting the move due to radiation poisoning fears and are unconvinced with the company's waste disposal plans.

Last night, Najib said in a non-committal tone that his administration's "preferred position" was to have Lynas dispose its waste abroad.

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