

Mayor dodges Dataran question, citing 'laws'
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By Koh Jun Lin

Kuala Lumpur Mayor Ahmad Fuad Ismail has defended his decision not to allow the Bersih 3.0 rally to take place at Dataran Merdeka, reiterating that his actions were backed by law and that alternative venues had been offered to the organisers.

“So, I have the law to back me. You must understand, otherwise the whole thing would be very disrupted if people can’t follow the law. Why don’t they (Bersih organisers) want to follow the law?”

“I have already given them the alternative... you can actually go there and sit inside,” he told a press conference at the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) headquarters today.

Fuad was responding to questions from reporters as to whether DBKL should have allowed the April 28 rally to take place at Dataran Merdeka to avoid the violence that took place.

Without responding directly to the question, he said: “I have with me the law; I have with me alternatives.”

He said there was a Dataran Merdeka by-law and the Peaceful Assembly Act, as well as the offer of several stadiums around Kuala Lumpur as alternative venues for the rally.

DBKL, he said, had suffered losses amounting to RM300,000 during the April 28 rally, covering damage to landscaping, the cost of hiring additional human resources and removal of eight tonnes of garbage from the streets.

“They say it’s Bersih. Actually it’s not *bersih* (clean), it’s *kotor* (dirty). The roads were all dirty,” Ahmad Fuad quipped.

Asked whether DBKL would take legal action against Bersih, the coalition for clean and fair elections that organised the rally, he said this remained to be seen.

However, DBKL has lodged a police report on the losses it suffered, he added.

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