

UM discourages students from attending Black 505 rally
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Universiti Malaya (UM) has discouraged its students from attending the 'Black 505' rally scheduled tomorrow at Padang Merbok, claiming it to be "illegal".

UM's student affairs department argued the rally "around KL" had failed to "obtain a permit from the authorities" and hence students should stay away.

"Students are reminded not to participate in the rally, be it directly or indirectly," said the student affairs department in a press release on its Facebook page today.

The university expressed safety concerns for the students and their future as participation in the rally would affect them, in particular during this exam season.

"Students are also urged to respect the decision of the people in the 13th general election," it added.

However, the brief statement did not bar the students outright and did not mention any punitive measures.

According to the Peaceful Assembly Act, organisers of a rally no longer require a police permit. However they still need approval from the owner of the venue, which in this case is KL City Hall (DBKL).

Previously, the organisers of the 'Black 505' rally, Pakatan Rakyat, had faced a stalemate with DBKL due to a last-minute venue switch for the Olympic Day Run by the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM).

However, due to OCM's postponement of the run due to the worsening haze, the issue of using Padang Merbok for the rally remains inconclusive.

'Black 505' rally organiser and PKR director of strategy Rafizi Ramli has insisted on going ahead with the rally to protest alleged electoral fraud in the last general election, at Padang Merbok.

"If not, it will set a precedent that under the Peaceful Assembly Act, the people can only gather at closed spaces, like stadiums," Rafizi said on Wednesday.

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