

Anti-Anwar UM students fear talk affects safety

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A group of students are asking for police protection over worry that opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's visit to Universiti Malaya (UM) will create unrest on campus.

Student group Penggerak Mahasiswa Universiti Malaya submitted a memorandum about its concerns to the police at the Pantai Police Station this afternoon, according to KiniTV.

The organisation's chairperson Wan Mohd Suhail Wan Senu said Anwar's scheduled presence in UM on Monday is expected to attract "thousands of fanatical supporters".

"We are afraid Anwar will misuse the program as a platform to incite and exploit the students to take to the streets in support of him," said Wan Mohd Suhail.

Anwar, who has been sentenced to five years in jail for sodomy and is free on bail, is appealing the decision at the Federal Court, which will hear the case on Oct 28 and 29.

The opposition leader has accused the ruling coalition of masterminding the charge and maintained that it is politically motivated.

Wan Mohd Suhail said Anwar had previously made use of students during a reformasi movement in 1998 when he was first charged with sodomy and corruption, and did not want to see a repeat of that.

No report lodged

He also accused the Universiti Malaya Students' Association president Fahmi Zainol, who helped organise Anwar's programme, of sedition for urging students to support the reformasi movement.

UM has insisted that Fahmi (extreme left in pic) does not have approval for organising Anwar's visit but the student leader is insisting that the event will go on.

Anwar, a member of the UM alumni, is expected to address students on campus the night before his hearing at the Federal Court.

Meanwhile, UM student representative council member Mohd Faridzuan Karim claimed Fahmi had organised Anwar's visit without consulting the student body.

Fahmi is also the university students representative council chief.

A police officer later received the memorandum from the students, who did not lodge a

police report.

Also present to lend support is UKM pro-Aspirasi spokesperson Farhan Khairuddin (right) who expressed concern that Anwar's "incitement" in UM may spread to other campus in Klang Valley.

"We ask that the police provides guarantee of peace and academic freedom.

"Academic freedom is being free of intellectual and mental control from external (political) parties," he said.

Anwar is MP, UM reminded

Countering critics, student group Pro-Mahasiswa's chairperson Safwan Shamsuddin today threw his support behind the Anwar programme, stressing that it was not a matter of giving blind support to the Permatang Pauh MP.

"I am confident students are smart enough to make their own decisions without indoctrination, and can accept the planned speech," he said in a statement today.

He added that right-thinking Malaysians are unable to accept the merits of Anwar's sodomy case and urged the public to turn up in force to show support for justice.

Meanwhile, Seputeh MP Teresa Kok today condemned the UM student affairs department's move to issue a show cause letter against Fahmi over the programme entitled '40 Years: From Universiti Malaya to Jail'.

She reminded the university Anwar is an elected representative and the opposition leader in Parliament.

"What valid and acceptable grounds can there be for the university administration to ban Anwar from giving the talk?

"I do not see any reason that can justify the university's most illogical decision.

"Anwar can cause public order problem? Certainly this is not an issue as he has been traveling and speaking throughout the nation without any public order issue," said the DAP parliamentarian.

Kok reminded UM of its duty to safeguard academic freedom, which includes students' right o listen to differing opinions.

"Unless it rescinds its decision to ban the talk, it will become a laughingstock among the international academic community and its reputation will certainly be affected," she said.

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