

Student body wants Umno to take up politics ban
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Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM) plans to hand over a memorandum on the cabinet's recent decision to ban student involvement in politics to Deputy Higher Education Minister Saifuddin Abdullah.

"We will submit the memorandum to the deputy minister, who is also an Umno supreme council member, so that it can be discussed when the council meets on Aug 27," SMM secretary Mohd Ridhuan Othman said.

SMM also plans to invite representatives from the government, opposition parties and student bodies as well as academicians to an open forum on the issue before the supreme council meets.

"Resolutions made at the forum will be listed in the memorandum," Ridhuan added at a press conference at the Kuala Lumpur court complex today.

No date or venue has been fixed as yet for the proposed forum, but SMM hopes Barisan Nasional's most powerful party will give serious attention to the students' position on the issue.

solidariti mahasiswa malaysia pc at kl court complex 130810 ahmad syukri kamarudin 01Gerakan Mahasiswa Sedar spokesperson Ahmad Syukri Kamarudin (right), and other student leaders who were also present, also voiced their outrage at statements made by Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"What are they afraid of? It's not like we're taking up arms or starting a rebellion.

"The government practises double standards, since overseas students are allowed to form Umno and '1Malaysia' clubs, while local students are not," Ahmad Syukri said.

Sufficient freedom

Other student leaders present were Kelab Rakan Islah Malaysia president Abdullah Omar Muhammad Fuad, University of Malaya Islamic Students Association president Muhammad Saufi Jelani, Gabungan Mahasiswa Islam Se-Malaysia president Mohd Idris Mohd Yusoff and Pro-Mahasiswa Nasional president Mohammad Shafie Hashim.

Khaled had announced on Wednesday that the cabinet decided against allowing university students to participate in party politics.

He said section 15 (5)(a) of the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 already gave "sufficient freedom" to students to engage in political activities.

This move has come under heavy criticism from leaders of student groups and youth leaders from both the government and the opposition.

'Communist state'

Kampung Tunku assemblyperson Low Eng San in a press statement today slammed the

cabinet's decision as "too shallow and totally unacceptable".

While the federal government allowed school teachers to be active in political parties, he said, why was it that "this same hypocrite government" was refusing to grant this right to university students?

"Is the BN-controlled federal government trying to slowly turn this nation into a communist state?" Low asked.

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