

MTUC pickets outside Parliament
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By Lisa J. Ariffin

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 3 — A 200-strong group from the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) turned up to protest at Parliament's gates this morning against the government's proposed revision of the Employment Act, while its top leaders and the Malaysian Employers Federation are locked in a meeting with the human resources minister.

The group started singing and shouting "Tarik balik! Tarik balik! [Take it back! Take it back!]", referring to the proposed changes to the labour law, but have not turned unruly under the watchful eyes of some 30 policemen on standby.

MTUC members picket outside Parliament in Kuala Lumpur on October 3, 2011 to protest the government's proposed revision of labour laws — Picture by Choo Choy May
MTUC president Mohd Khalid Atan had expressed concern the revision will not properly protect the rights of contract workers, saying that the Bill should not go through as it had not been approved at the NLAC.

According to MTUC vice-president A. Balasubramaniam, the meeting, chaired by minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam at the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC), started at 10am.

"We went ahead with the picket to express our disappointment with the proposed amendments," Balasubramaniam said, adding he expected more supporters will show up later.

At the picket line, Khalid said: "I have handed a letter to the minister with regards to the amendments to the Employment Bill. We also told him that we have to be at the picket line.

"We hope the government and also the minister concerned will look into our grievances and whatever clauses we have brought up," he added.

Khalid said MTUC wanted the workers' fundamental rights to be upheld.

"We are of the opinion that the amendments will erode workers' rights and job security in tenure.

"So we request the government especially Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to intervene," he said.

Khalid said as the Bill was not going to be tabled today, the MTUC would have further discussions on its next course of action at its next annual general council.

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