

Call off Himpun rally, says Soi Lek
The Malaysian Insider
October 19, 2011
By Lisa J. Ariffin

SERI KEMBANGAN, Oct 19 — Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek wants Saturday's rally against "Christians challenging the sovereignty of Islam" called off to avoid racial tension.

Various Muslim organisations are set to gather for the event at Selangor's Shah Alam Stadium.

Observers fear the event may raise religious tension already intensified in recent months by allegations of proselytising by Christians.

"Whether it should go on or not, I think the police would know what to do, but personally I feel that there should not be any public rally," said Dr Chua (picture).

"We should reduce any form of religious activity that would contribute to suspicion among all races in the country."

Christian leaders here have labelled Himpun's fight against proselytisation "irrelevant" and cautioned the group against provoking religious tension by going ahead with the rally.

The leaders have reminded rally organisers that their actions could incite animosity between both religious communities, force Muslims and Christians further apart and hamper any effort by the government and religious leaders to promote understanding and harmony.

"I think it is very unnecessary because to a very large extent, everyone knows there is no concrete proof of proselytisation," National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) chairman Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng (picture) told The Malaysian Insider.

Eu pointed out the Selangor Sultan had already decreed recently there was insufficient evidence of proselytisation in the controversy surrounding the raid on the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) on August 3.

Himpun or Himpunan Sejuta Umat (Gathering of a Million Faithful), which claims to have the backing of some 2,000 NGOs representing over four million Muslims nationwide, was mooted after the incident and aims to protest against Christians "challenging the sovereignty" of Islam.

The rally, to take place at the Shah Alam stadium, appears to have earned the support of thousands, including PAS Youth and Umno Youth members, and looks set to turn into a massive coming together of conservative Muslims in the country.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) said today it will not support Saturday's rally.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told a press conference today that there was no reason to fear the church as "we have all the power and laws to enhance the understanding of Islam but it has not been done" by the Barisan Nasional (BN) govern

About 1,000 Facebook users have confirmed their attendance so far but should Himpun draw much more this weekend, it could push Umno and PAS to rethink their religious positioning.

With ethnic tensions already rising in the years following the 2008 general election, it could raise already simmering fears of Islamisation among non-Muslims and more liberal Malays.

"Everybody must accept the fact that it is a multiracial country, and a diversity of views," Dr Chua said.

"And if we cannot accept that and would want to always impose our religion on others, there will always be tension."

The Malaysian Insider

Hakcipta © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/call-off-himpun-rally-says-soi-lek/>