

PAS tells members not to attend rally in party colours
The Malaysian Insider
October 19, 2011
By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 – Selangor PAS has threatened disciplinary action against those who participate in this Saturday's Himpun rally as party members, saying they must heed their central leadership's decision to keep the event apolitical.

Selangor PAS commissioner Dr Abd Rani Osman confirmed with The Malaysian Insider today he had issued the directive to all leaders of the party's various wings after PAS' political bureau met last night.

"Selangor PAS will heed and adopt the stand taken by our central leadership that we should not attend the gathering as a political party. This is to respect the wishes of Himpun's organisers to keep the event apolitical," he said when contacted this afternoon.

He added Himpun, or Himpunan Sejuta Umat (Gathering of a Million Faithful), is organised by a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and is meant to be an apolitical gathering.

"PAS is a political party, not an NGO. We should not participate," he said.

The Meru assemblyman however said party members could still attend the gathering if they wished to do so but in their capacity as NGO representatives.

Should any party member be spotted attending the event bearing PAS banners or logos and declaring themselves members of the party, disciplinary action will be taken, he said.

"If any chaos breaks out, such as participants lashing out at Christians or threatening Christians... or perhaps violent acts like the burning of any paraphernalia and so on, these members will have to answer for themselves if they are seen abetting such acts," he warned.

Dr Rani also echoed his party's view last night that participants in the mass rally should be careful the gathering would not provoke religious tension in the country or result in violence.

"Islam does not preach or promote violence among those of different faiths. We do not want any problems," he said.

Himpun, which claims to have the backing of some 2,000 NGOs representing over four million Muslims nationwide, was mooted after the controversial raid on the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) and aims to protest against Christians "challenging the sovereignty" of Islam.

The rally, to take place at the Shah Alam stadium this Saturday, appears to have earned the support of thousands nationwide and looks set to turn into a massive coming together of conservative Muslims in the country.

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

Christian leaders have already voiced their uneasiness over the event, saying its objective to fight proselytisation is "irrelevant" as the authorities are yet to find concrete proof of such activities in the country.

They also 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.

Following the DUMC church raid, the Selangor Sultan decreed there was insufficient evidence to prove that Christians were proselytising to Muslims at the church.

The Malaysian Insider

Hakcipta © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pas-tells-members-not-to-attend-rally-in-party-colours/>