

Apostasy worse than reported, claims Himpun
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SHAH ALAM, Oct 22 — Himpunan Sejuta Umat said today the problem of Muslim apostasy in Malaysia was greater than what has been reported and suggested this was part of a global plan to destroy Islam.

Himpun chairman Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid said while the government had released statistics on the number of Muslims who left the faith, this was just a fraction of those who had converted from Islam.

"That's what was reported. It's the ones that were not reported that we're worried about because there are a lot that weren't reported," he told reporters here after closing the Himpun rally that saw just 5,000 Muslims turning up.

Azmi singled out Evangelical Christians as the key threat to Islam in Malaysia, and vowed that Himpun would ensure their plans to destroy Islam would not succeed.

"The enemies of Islam are global. Islam has been a problem to many of the Western Zionist movements," he said.

"It is a well-known fact. There are people who see Islam as a target."

Speakers at Himpun had earlier linked the Evangelicals to the global Zionist movement and alleged that the Christian faction viewed Islam as "an obstacle" that must be overcome.

Azmi added that there was proof that the Evangelicals were actively trying to convert Muslims in Malaysia but did not cite his sources.

Himpunan Sejuta Umat was organised by various right-wing religious groups calling for Muslims to rise up and fight the "challenge of Christianisation".

The mass rally was mooted following the controversial August 3 raid by Selangor Islamic authorities on Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC), where it was alleged that Christians were converting Muslims.

It is illegal to proselytise Muslims in Malaysia.

With racial tension stoked in recent years by church firebombings and the cow head protest, today's rally could resurrect fears of growing Islamisation among non-Muslims and more liberal Malays despite its poor turnout.

Christian leaders have denied claims that Christians were attempting to convert Muslims and have called Himpun's fight "irrelevant".

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