

Himpun to go national
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SHAH ALAM, Oct 22 — Himpunan Sejuta Umat will take its message nationwide soon in an effort to put a stop to what it says are concerted attempts to convert Muslims.

Himpun chairman Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid said the movement would send letters to all Malay rulers and state chiefs to seek permission to bring its message to a wider audience.

He said Himpun would first distribute its 10-point declaration to the people before following up with a roadshow to explain the manifesto point-by-point.

The 10-point declaration comprises the following demands.

- * All parties must respect and support the role of the Malay rulers in carrying out their duty as defenders of Islam
- * Federal and state governments must ensure the highest sensitivity to Islam and the Constitution
- * The federal government must ensure the laws meant to replace the Internal Security Act (ISA) safeguard Islam
- * The federal government must come up with specific laws to eradicate efforts to convert Muslims
- * Review the national education system to ensure Muslim students are not exposed to anything that can erode their faith
- * Conduct federal information programmes so that Malaysians understand Islam and its special position to avoid misunderstanding
- * All political parties and NGOs must put Islam as its highest agenda and treat threats to its sanctity seriously
- * Institutions and Muslim parents must responsibly educate their children so they stay away from activities that can threaten their faith
- * The federal government must monitor print and electronic media to ensure there is no news that can hurt the sensitivities of Muslims
- * Muslims must forget their political affiliations and unite to protect Islam from further encroachment

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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