

Himpun: ISA replacement laws must safeguard Islam
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SHAH ALAM, Oct 22 – Himpunan Sejuta Umat (Himpun) demanded today provisions safeguarding Islam's special position are drafted into the new laws being drafted to replace the Internal Security Act (ISA).

Himpun chairman Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid delivering his speech during the the Himpun rally at Shah Alam Stadium, Selangor October 22 2011. — Picture by Choo Choy May
id stressed those inclusions into the two planned laws will preserve racial and religious harmony in Malaysia.

He said existing state laws to stop conversion of Muslims were inadequate and needed to be beefed up, and urged state Islamic authorities take the threat of proselytisation more seriously.

"We feel it is not enough. We are not serious in enforcing. The authorities should check. It's not just one incident," he told reporters here after closing Himpun.

While he did not deny that there were weaknesses in how zakat (alms) were distributed, Azmi said this did not mean other religions should see this as an opportunity to preach to Muslims.

"All agencies have their weakness, not just religious agencies, but there are people taking advantage of that weakness," he said.

"That's not right. Why do you take advantage of these poor people?"

He added that state Islamic authorities should keep an eye on at-risk groups to ensure they were not enticed by insincere offers of aid from other religions.

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.

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

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