

Perkasa says Himpun united PAS and Umno
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By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 23 — Malay rights group Perkasa lauded the success of Himpunan Sejuta Umat (Himpun) saying it unified Muslims even from opposing political factions.

“To me it is a success. One of the most successful part was that there were PAS and Umno leaders on the stage, and other individuals who are not affiliated with any parties are on the stage as well.

“I believe Umno or PAS members and Malays in PKR, they all support (Himpun) but maybe they have to follow instructions from their leaders. I don’t understand why are they not allowed to gather,” secretary-general Syed Hassan Syed Ali said today.

He shrugged off the low turn out of about 5,000 as “the one million means one million who are with us in spirit.

“To me, the ones who are with Himpun are almost every Muslim in this country. Only a small number of Muslims are liberal who are not really interested in this rally,” he said.

Himpun chairman Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid has also said yesterday it is not concerned with the poor turnout at the rally, arguing that the spirit of the 5,000-strong crowd was more important.

Azmi also said he considered the rally a great success as it proved that Muslims could come together to talk calmly about the issues affecting Islam, whatever their background or political affiliation.

He said non-Muslims should not fear the movement or its goals as the rally had been conducted with “no feelings of animosity” towards them.

Syed Hassan said the rally is one of the many warnings against any future attempts to proselytise Muslims.

“This is to show them that if this continues, the rally will be bigger. If we need to launch a crusade, we will do it,” he said.

Himpun 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.

Christian leaders have denied claims that Christians were attempting to convert Muslims and have called Himpun’s fight “irrelevant”.

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