

Asri: 'Seksualiti Merdeka' must be rejected
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 3 — Influential Muslim scholar Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin has joined the chorus of disapproval against the "Seksualiti Merdeka" festival, saying today any attempt to justify or proceed with the event "cannot be allowed".

The former Perlis mufti said if the programme was meant to be an open campaign to justify homosexuality and transexuality, it must be rejected by society.

"If those of different faiths feel there is nothing wrong with that in their religion, that is up to them.

"But such open campaigns aimed at promoting sin must be rejected," Asri (picture) said in a statement.

A host of Muslim groups like Perkasa and opposition party PAS have already expressed outrage against "Seksualiti Merdeka", an annual festival to promote sexuality rights in Malaysia.

Perkasa and several other groups lodged police reports yesterday against the programme which goes on until November 13, and demanded the Inspector-General of Police cancel the event.

The groups' outrage also earned front-page news in Malay daily Utusan Malaysia yesterday along with articles on PAS's objection to this month's concert by singer Elton John, a self-admitted homosexual.

Asri suggested today that instead of organising such festivals, "workshop days" could be held offering psychological therapy for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

"Apart from granting them the space to express their feelings and issues, they could also be offered solutions from religious aspects," he said.

He added that any political party that voices support for the ongoing festival would not be eligible to helm the Malaysian government.

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