

IGP to Seksualiti Merdeka organisers: Let's meet
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 — The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) is prepared to meet the organisers of Seksualiti Merdeka 2011 to hear their clarification of the festival's objectives, Bernama Online reported today.

Tan Sri Ismail Omar (picture) told the news portal that he is open to meeting the organisers as he is keen to safeguard public order.

Seksualiti Merdeka's organisers called off all public events yesterday in the interest of participants' safety as they sought a meeting to clarify the festival's objectives to the IGP.

Ismail, however, added that police investigations into the festival and its organisers would continue.

The police are understood to be investigating the matter under Section 298A of the Penal Code and Section 27A(1)(c) of the Police Act.

The IGP also said the festival's organisers had been asked to provide the police with their statements as part of the ongoing investigations.

Seksualiti Merdeka, a movement championing freedom for sexual orientation and gender identity, has been holding the festival annually since 2008 but sparked a heated debate after the government banned this year's celebration.

Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Khalid Abu Bakar said on Friday the police were not against freedom of expression or human rights but had to step in because the organisers did not have a permit to hold the festival in public.

He also said the police had banned the event to safeguard public order after receiving several reports against Seksualiti Merdeka.

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