

**Seksualiti Merdeka says ban on festival unconstitutional, illegal**  
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**By Melissa Chi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 10 — The Seksualiti Merdeka movement today filed a judicial review against the ban on its annual sexuality rights festival, saying it is “absolutely unconstitutional, illegal and undemocratic”.

It was represented by Pang Khee Teik, Angela Kuga Thas, Thilaga Sulathireh, Siti Kasim and Michelle Nor Ismat.

“We are asking that the ban be removed and declared null and void, and that the police give us copies of all reports made against us,” the movement said in a statement.

It named the Inspector-General of Police, the deputy IGP, and the Dang Wangi police deputy chief as respondents.

Seksualiti Merdeka, a movement championing the freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity, was not allowed by the authorities to hold the festival last year despite having held it annually since 2008.

“Last year... our event was banned by the deputy IGP on the basis that Seksualiti Merdeka is allegedly a deviationist activity that could destroy religious freedom, could create disharmony, enmity and disturb public order, and could threaten national security.

“These claims are illogical and ridiculous,” it said.

It also said that the deputy IGP has neither power nor basis to declare such a ban.

“The ban is absolutely unconstitutional, illegal and undemocratic. We are truly outraged by this blatant abuse of power against innocent citizens.

“We are deeply disappointed that some media have twisted the truth about us and subjected us to further misunderstanding,” it said.

Human rights activists, including Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir, lashed out at media reports describing the event as a “free sex festival”, and threatened to sue if the matter was not clarified.

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