

Pakatan will pay for KUIN suspensions, say student activists
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23 — Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia (SAMM) today warned the Kedah menteri besar students would vote out the PAS-led state government if it continues to restrict academic freedom.

The PKR-linked NGO said this after Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak defended Kolej Universiti Insaniah (Kuin) in Alor Setar for suspending five of its students in May last year under the University and University Colleges Act (UUCA).

"The student arm of Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia strongly condemns the Kedah PAS government under Azizan Razak for using the oppressive act to stifle students' freedom of speech.

"Azizan Razak should be more open and professional in tackling issues pertaining to students," SAMM said in a statement.

It noted that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) had stated in its Buku Jingga manifesto the opposition would repeal the UUCA once in power and pointed out that Azizan's actions had shown up the pact's promise as political rhetoric.

SAMM added that Azizan had insulted students, who were "bright and whose thinking could not be easily colonised".

"Don't ignore the voice of the students. Their role should be acknowledged and their voice should be heard by the rulers," the group urged.

The "Kuin Five" were hauled up before a disciplinary committee on May 25, 2011 for breaching the UUCA by participating in a demonstration, making speeches with loudspeakers and holding a press conference to protest the use of a religious teaching block to house a smart school.

Mohd Faiz Mohd Arshad was suspended for two semesters while the rest were barred for one semester and given warning letters.

Although the suspension was meted out nearly eight months ago with four of the five having already served their one-semester bans, the activists have continued to pursue the matter in court.

However, the Kuala Lumpur High Court postponed the January 18, 2011 hearing on the suit to challenge the suspension without giving a new date.

Student groups Movement for Academic Freedom (Bebas) and Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM) have also condemned the Kedah government for suspending the "Kuin Five" but have yet to receive any response from the state despite submitting a memorandum on December 29, 2011.

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