

Terengganu government revokes 6 student loans over Bersih involvement
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 — The Terengganu government has revoked the study loans of six students over their participation in last year's Bersih 2.0 rally, Sinar Harian reported today.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Said said the state government made the decision following unsatisfactory responses from the students to their show cause letters.

"We pay them to study, not to participate in demonstrations or get involved in undesirable situations," the Malay daily quoted Ahmad Said as saying today.

"The state government hopes this serves as a warning to others to not get involved in improper activities," he added.

Ahmad Said said the students participated in the illegal July 9 rally for electoral reforms as well as a protest against the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) earlier this year.

However, the state leader said the six students, including a third-year medical student, may still appeal against the decision.

"We shall see," he said.

The Terengganu government's move comes despite promises from the Najib administration to relax its grip on civil liberties after its clampdown on the Bersih 2.0 rally last year earned international condemnation.

Among others, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak mooted the Peaceful Assembly Act, which was passed in Parliament last year, as well as plans to amend Section 15 of the controversial UUCA to allow students to become active members of political parties.

The Bersih rally also saw Najib forming the parliamentary select committee for electoral reforms, tasking it to look into ways of improving the country's highly-criticised election process. The committee concludes on April 2.

Thousands thronged the capital's streets last July 9 to join Bersih 2.0 in its march for free and fair elections despite it earlier being outlawed by Putrajaya.

The protest, which Bersih leaders and opposition parties had promised would be peaceful, turned chaotic when riot police moved in to disperse the crowd using tear gas canisters and chemical-laced water, resulting in hundreds of arrests and the death of an ex-soldier.

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/terengganu-government-revo-kes-six-student-loans-over-bersih-involvement/>