

Anti-Lynas groups can rally 50m outside mosques, says Kuantan MP
The Malaysian Insider
April 12, 2012
By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 — Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh has suggested that anti-Lynas groups stage their mosque protests 50m away from the houses of worship tomorrow, noting a provision in the recently-passed Peaceful Assembly Act 2011 (PAA).

“We don’t plan to go against the law. Its just a movement to show solidarity.”

“The law says that we can gather at a place of worship provided that the 50m radius rule is observed.

“So with regards to that, I believe that all the participants will observe that,” she told The Malaysian Insider when contacted.

A coalition of some 22 non-governmental organisations called Solidariti SeMalaysia Himpunan Hijau will be staging protests at several mosques nationwide, hoping to correct the misconception that the Lynas Corp issue only concerns the Chinese community and those living near the mining firm’s rare earth refinery at the Gebeng Industrial Estate in Kuantan.

But their plans have come under heavy criticism from Malay rights group Perkasa who called the protest political and predicted that it would spark off riots and unrest among the Malays.

De facto law minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz had also called on the groups to protest elsewhere, noting that mosques are among the prohibited places to hold such gatherings under the PAA.

The PAA states that the Home Minister may gazette “designated places of assembly” where organisers need not notify authorities in advance of a planned rally.

But gatherings can be held anywhere outside a 50m radius of a prohibited place as long as police are given 10 days’ advance notice.

The list of prohibited places includes dams, reservoirs, water catchment areas, water treatment plants, electricity generating stations, petrol stations, hospitals, fire stations, airports, railways, land public transport terminals, ports, canals, docks, wharves, piers, bridges, marinas, places of worship and kindergartens and schools.

Asked today if she endorsed tomorrow’s protests, Fuziah (picture) said it was not an event planned under her watch as the anti-Lynas struggle has expanded so much that it has now entered “autorun” mode.

“So many people championing it now, which is good because I can do other things... it has gone on autorun.

"But the event tomorrow is not to start trouble, it is just to show solidarity, that it is not only the non-Malays who support the movement," she said.

She added that she would not be participating in tomorrow's events as she would be back in her constituency.

The main venue for the event will be at the Dataran Kemerdekaan in Shah Alam, where anti-Lynas protesters will first gather at the Shah Alam mosque before marching to the Dataran. The PAA prohibits street marches.

The government had recently formed a parliamentary select committee (PSC) to look into the Lynas issue, but critics have dismissed it as a public relations exercise by the Najib administration.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers, who are part of the anti-Lynas movement along with Kuantan residents, have decided to boycott the PSC, which has been given three months to resolve the ongoing dispute.

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