

Rally Organisers Breached Peaceful Assembly Act 2011

Bernama

April 29, 2012

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 29 (Bernama) -- Unruly acts, breaching the police barricade and making children a party to an opposition-backed rally, reflect a failure on the part of its organisers to abide by the Peaceful Assembly Act 2011.

The Act states that a person below age 21 cannot be an organiser while children under 15 are not allowed to participate in a rally of such nature.

Those found guilty under the Act are liable to a fine of up to RM20,000.

Political observer Che Hamdan Mohamed Razali, from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Dungun campus, Terengganu said, today's rally organisers led by Datuk S. Ambiga and backed by Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang were liable under the law.

"Ambiga and the other opposition leaders succeeded in drawing a crowd but she failed to control them," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Che Hamdan, who is also political science lecturer at the campus, said bringing children to the rally was akin to indirectly telling them that it was all right to go against the government in such manner. What we worry about is that it might potentially become a culture to these children in the future," he said.

The rally did not focus on 'clean and fair elections' alone; Other issues, among them, Lynas, National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT), as well as the Felda Global Ventures Holdings (FGVH) listing in the Malaysian stock market were dragged in, as well.

Che Hamdan said, if the organisers had only focused on election issues, there would not have been as many participants, probably a mere 8,000.

"That's why, the opposition exploited issues such as Lynas, LGBT, PTPTN and the FGVH, to gain support. For example, they used the PTPTN issue to draw support from the youth.

"This is their strategy to attract a large crowd," he said.

Experts have affirmed that the Lynas Corporation's rare earth processing plant in Gebeng, Kuantan, Pahang was safe, barring non-compliance of the regulations by Lynas. Nevertheless, the Malaysia Science Academy will organise a dialogue programme on Lynas next month, for those who still do not understand or insist on further explanation on the issue.

As for LGBT, Che Hamdan said Malaysia, as an Islamic country, did not condone such practices which were against the teachings of Islam.

Meanwhile, the rally had failed to achieve its 100,000 participation target.

Police said the 20,000 participants at the rally was a small number as compared to the city's population of 1.8 million.

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