

Pakatan picks Padang Merbok for June 15 rally
Malaysian Insider
June 5, 2013
By Syed Jaymal Zahiid

PETALING JAYA, June 5 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will hold its “Black 505” rally to protest alleged fraud in Election 2013 at Padang Merbok in Kuala Lumpur, following authorities’ advice against using the iconic Dataran Merdeka as the venue, its leaders revealed today.

PKR strategy director and Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli said notices for the planned rally — scheduled for 2pm next Saturday — were submitted to the police and Kuala Lumpur City Hall today, adding that he expects no arrests to be made since the protest will be done in accordance with the Peaceful Assembly Act (PPA).

“The decision to hold the ‘Black 505’ rally at Padang Merbok took into considerations the Royal Malaysia Police’s advice against using Dataran Merdeka, although we feel that Dataran Merdeka is the most suitable for the rakyat to gather and voice their aspiration contained in the ‘Black 505’ demands,” he told reporters at PKR’s headquarters here.

“Black 505” was created as a movement of protest against allegations of widespread irregularities in the May 5 general election that saw the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) retain power despite losing the popular vote.

The opposition and rights groups movement have held several rallies nationwide since May 5 to demand for polls reform, outlining three main conditions with the first being the resignation of all Elections Commission (EC) members for its failure to ensure a free and fair Election 2013.

“And the new interim members of the EC must be appointed through negotiations with and consented by PR, (poll reform group) Bersih and other civil society groups,” said Rafizi.

The other two demands are re-elections in seats where its results are highly disputed due to purported fraud and stopping all plans to amend electoral laws, including the redrawing of constituencies, until the appointment of a new EC interim lineup that is agreed by all parties.

Rafizi said at least 30 seats should undergo a re-election due to the high probability of vote manipulation in these constituencies. PR had won 89 seats against Barisan Nasional’s (BN) 133.

PR is expecting to see a maximum turnout at its June 15 rally following the tremendous response shown in other “Black 505” protests which saw an average attendance of more than 10,000 at each gathering.

Despite the rallies proceeding peacefully, the authorities have begun charging organisers and speakers in what is seen as a crackdown on critics of the Najib administration.

Yesterday, Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the police will allow the opposition-planned rally in the city to proceed if it is conducted within the provisions of the PPA.

The opposition pact said it will try and engage with Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri

Khalid Abu Bakar to ensure its rally will proceed smoothly and peacefully.

Rafizi also said that the venue of the protest may change to Dataran Merdeka, pending approval from the authorities.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pakatan-picks-padang-merbok-for-june-15-rally/>