

Pakatan: Black 505 rally postponed to June 22
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By Syed Jaymal Zahiid

PETALING JAYA, June 10 — The planned mammoth rally to protest alleged polls fraudulence slated for this Saturday will be postponed to June 22 after Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) claimed the venue has been booked for another function, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) revealed today.

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli said the decision was made after taking into consideration the appeals made by the event's organisers.

The move comes just after DBKL refused to grant permission to use Padang Merbok for the rally with Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor insisting that the open field was unsuitable for the venue.

"I am taking into consideration the appeals made by parties who had already planned programmes at Padang Merbok on June 15.

"After discussing with the Dang Wangi police headquarters the organisers have decided to change the date of the Black 505 peaceful rally to the next weekend, that is on June 22, and it will start at noon," Rafizi told a press conference at PKR's headquarters here.

The Pandan MP revealed that a notice for the rally had already been submitted to DBKL last Friday, which is two days after the notice for the June 15 rally was submitted.

Rafizi said City Hall had confirmed with the rally organisers that no other event will take place there on June 22.

"So there is no excuse for DBKL and the federal territories minister to play politics and delay our application.

"I would like to remind the minister that a big majority of Federal Territories residents are with Pakatan Rakyat and he must respect the wishes of the residents to hold a peaceful rally at Padang Merbok which belongs to the people," he said.

Rafizi stressed that the decision to hold the protest next week is "final".

On Saturday, Tengku Adnan said that City Hall would not permit PR to use Padang Merbok for its June 15 rally.

The Barisan Nasional (BN) secretary-general denied, however, that this was intended to stop the federal opposition pact from proceeding with the event, saying instead that the venue was not suitable as it was an open space.

He advised PR to move its rally to an indoor venue, such as a stadium or other locations deemed more appropriate.

"We allow them to hold their gathering in a closed area. I was informed by the mayor that they applied to use Padang Merbok.

"But to me, Padang Merbok is an open space... when it comes to open spaces, we will not give (our permission) because we know the law and abide by it," he said when approached after a function in KL Sentral here.

PR chose Padang Merbok as the venue for its June 15 rally after the authorities advised them against using the iconic Dataran Merdeka.

Rafizi said today PR's decision to heed the advice indicated the bloc's readiness to engage the authorities constructively but warned against exploiting it.

Black 505" was created as a protest movement 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.

Immediately after the May 5 polls, PKR's #siasatPRU13 team made a series of exposes on what it claimed was proof of polls fraud as the opposition moved to pressure Putrajaya to implement polls reform, starting with the complete overhaul of the Election Commission (EC).

PR and other civil society groups have since held mammoth rallies since May 5 to push their agenda for reform, outlining three main conditions with the first being the resignation of all EC members for the commission's failure to ensure a free and fair Election 2013.

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