

'Red shirt' rally on Malaysia Day now legal, says IGP
The Malaysian Insider
Sept 14, 2015
By Elizabeth Zachariah

The Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu or "red shirt" rally on Wednesday is now legal under the Peaceful Assembly Act, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said today, after organisers obtained permission from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to use Padang Merbok for the gathering.

The country's top cop also assured that police will protect the safety and security of everyone in Kuala Lumpur, urging Malaysians not to believe rumours calling for non-Malays to stay away from the city because of possible riots on the day of the rally.

"Now, the rally will be allowed to go on. Although personally, I don't agree to demonstrations but we will allow it as it fulfils the criteria under the law," he told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

"We will be deploying enough manpower and we are capable of ensuring the safety and security of everyone."

He said this following reports that Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) had given approval to the Persekutuan Silat Kebangsaan Malaysia's (Pesaka) to use Padang Merbok as the venue for its Malaysia Day rally.

The IGP said since organiser have obtained permission from DBKL to hold the rally at the field, police will help to facilitate the rally and ensure that it is held peacefully.

"We will ensure that it is carried out in a peaceful and disciplined manner."

Khalid said that police will be monitoring speeches made during the rally and vows to take action against anyone who makes seditious remarks.

"I advise this organiser. I ask them to prove that this will be a peaceful demonstration and that they will adhere to the law. We will be monitoring the content of their speeches."

He also urged the people not to believe messages going around that warn non-Malays to stay away from Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday because of the rally.

"Don't believe such messages. Those who are spreading these things are purposely trying to create fear in certain groups of people."

"I can assure you that the police will ensure the safety and security of everyone."

The 'red shirt' rally or "Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu" is said to be held to counter last month's Bersih 4 rally, which had called for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's resignation over alleged financial scandals.

The gathering is also being held to express anger over footage of Bersih 4 participants stomping on pictures of Najib and PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

The rally's organisers claim it is not a racist get-together, but critics have pointed out that they use slogans such as "kebangkitan maruah Melayu" (rise of Malay honour), which have communal sentiments.

Police had earlier declared the rally illegal and said that it would not allow the gathering go on as organisers had previously planned to gather in Jalan Bukit Bintang. – September 14, 2015.

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