

Najib says no endorsement, but Umno won't stop members joining 'red shirt' rally

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By Eileen Ng

Umno is not endorsing the proposed "red shirt" rally on September 16, said party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak, but added that the party is also not stopping members from taking part in the gathering.

Najib also said that the party is not involved in sponsoring the rally.

"Umno is not involved in sponsoring the rally but we admit there are leaders who represent their respective NGOs who feel they have to be at the rally," he told reporters after chairing the party's supreme council meeting today.

To a question if the party will prevent members from joining the rally, he answered, "No, it's a free country, as long as they observe the law. No one is above the law, including Umno members".

Earlier today, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said police will summon the organisers of the gathering for a meeting, adding that the force will not allow the September 16 rally to go on.

The gathering is being purportedly held to "counter" the recent Bersih 4 rally, which had called for Najib's resignation over alleged financial scandals.

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

Najib said the organiser of the rally, which is said to be a Malay rights group, should adhere to police's directive.

He said the rally should not be allowed to threaten the country's peace and harmony, and should not be turned into a racially-tinged platform.

"We reject this. Umno is a party based on solidarity with our BN partners and we believe in racial diversity which is the foundation to strengthen the country," he added. – September 9, 2015.

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