

UMS students planning demo urged to think rationally

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KOTA KINABALU: Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Datuk Mustapha Sakmud advised the student group planning to organise a protest gathering over the water supply issue at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on June 14 to think rationally.

He also urged the students to seek accurate information and facts about the water issue by engaging with the UMS management, Sabah State Water Department, or any relevant parties.

“The student group needs to distinguish between on-campus and off-campus problems... even though it is a water issue, we need to act appropriately.

“As Malaysian citizens, we have rights and responsibilities. I do not oppose the student group continuing with the protest as long as it follows existing regulations,” he told reporters after officiating the UpayaKPT Sepanggar Programme here on Saturday.

Mustapha, who is also the Member of Parliament for Sepanggar, was commenting on the planned #KamiMahuAir Sabah Protest on June 14 in front of Menara Kinabalu here.

Commenting further, he said

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— Datuk Mustapha Sakmud, Deputy Minister of Higher Education



DATUK MUSTAPHA SAKMUD

the organisers need to obtain a permit from the police if they wish to proceed with the protest.

“If they get permission, they can proceed; we cannot stop them,” he said.

A group of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) students are resolute in their stance to stage an upcoming protest on water issues plaguing the institution despite a stern warning from their vice-chancellor.

#KamiMahuAir Sabah secretariat coordinator, Mohammad Norhamdin Nordin, 23, from the university’s Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, said on Friday this is because the scope for this planned protest is broader as they will be expressing

dissatisfaction on water problems affecting not only UMS but the state of Sabah as a whole.

Norhamdin dismissed vice-chancellor Datuk Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor’s caution to call off the event on the grounds of it possibly disturbing the students’ studies, saying that the longstanding water predicament has already been negatively affecting them as they have to worry about how they are going to take showers and use the toilet before or after going to classes.

He also brushed off Kasim’s other reason to not hold the demonstration which Mustapha is already closely monitoring the situation and conducting frequent visits to the university, claiming that Mustapha’s

promise to settle the issue by June 6 has yet to be fulfilled.

Around 100 people are expected to attend the demonstration, which is planned to be held in front of Menara Kinabalu here on June 14.

In a statement on Thursday, Kasim had urged students and the public to avoid participating in the protest to prevent any disruption to public order and to allow the other students to focus on their studies.

Kasim said the university believes that any issues should be addressed through the correct procedures and channels rather than through hasty actions.