

# Students end protest, fail to meet CM

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**KOTA KINABALU:** A group of University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) students ended their protest over the water shortage problem at their campus on Saturday morning after camping for 17 hours opposite Menara Kinabalu.

Their hopes of personally handing over their six-point memorandum to the Chief Minister were dashed as Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor did not turn up.

Mohammad Norhamdin Nordin, the coordinator of the protest, said the peaceful demonstration was very “big and meaningful” not just for UMS, but Sabahans at large.

“We endured 17 hours waiting for the Chief Minister to come and collect the memorandum from us, but he was unwilling, it is alright.

“We have decided not to hand over our memorandum but he will be able to find the memorandum as it is widely publicised on social media,” he added.

The secretariat of the protest, known as #KamiMahuAir ((#WeWantWater), had earlier refused to hand over the memorandum to Deputy Chief Minister III and Works Minister Datuk Shahelmey Yahya on Friday.

On a teacher and eight students detained by police at the demonstration on Friday, Mohammad Norhamdin said they stand in solidarity with them and are closely monitoring the case.

He said they were from the alternative school at Teluk Layang to provide education

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to stateless children, who are part of the fourth and fifth generations born in Sabah.

“Malaysia, as a member of Unicef’s Convention on the Rights of the Child, has failed to provide the children’s right to education,” he added.

Mohammad Norhamdin also denied that the protest was politically motivated, adding that no political party was involved.

“The presence of political figures at the protest was in their personal capacity,” he said.

On Friday, about 80 individuals, including UMS students, community representatives, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), gathered in front of Menara Kinabalu and wanted to hand over a memorandum to the



**Mohammad Norhamdin (middle) speaking to the media in front of the Menara Kinabalu building before dispersing on Saturday.**

Chief Minister.

The water problem at UMS and its surrounding area stems from a shortage of supply from the Telibong water treatment plant in Tuaran due to increased demand compared to supply.

Shahelmey told reporters on Friday that sabotage and water thefts are the main reasons for the prevailing water supply

problem in Sepanggar, one of the worst hit areas in Sabah.

He said efforts by the Sabah Water Department to supply treated water has been frequently undermined by constant illegal tapping of its main transmission line by illegal squatters in this area.

UMS is located in the Sepanggar constituency.