



WE would like to clarify the inaccuracies in the statements made by the Kuala Lumpur Mayor, Ahmad Fuad Ismail, as quoted in an [April 23](#) Malaysiakini article.

According to the mayor:

1. Fahmi was not arrested

□ The mayor says that Fahmi Reza was not arrested and that he followed the officers. But as our [video footage](#) shows, he was forced to get into an unmarked van and taken to a police station. This is effectively an arrest as he was apprehended.

2. Fahmi acknowledge that he committed an offence

□ The mayor says that since Fahmi Reza signed the release form to collect Occupy Dataran's supplies after the Royal Concert, he knew that he was committing an offence. However, he was informed by DBKL officers that signing it is merely an acknowledgement of receipt of our things. Thus, Fahmi signed the document with good faith and without prejudice. There was never any admission of guilt to any offense.

□ We want to note again that, on Saturday evening, ([Malaysiakini 21 April](#)) the DBKL officer asked us to remove our tents to respect the Royal Concert which was happening at night. He reiterated that, after tonight, we can continue camping there, until 28th April or even beyond. He also offered to store our things into the DBKL truck, and promised to return it to us after the concert ends. Please refer to the report for more details.

□ Prior to that, the same DBKL officer had told us that we are allowed to keep three tents. However, he was quoted in the media as saying that we must move our tents. We find these inconsistencies from the DBKL confusing.

Why is Occupy Dataran part of the encampment?

Occupy Dataran is an independent and autonomous grassroots initiative to reclaim Dataran Merdeka as an open and democratic space for people to gather, discuss and explore the true meaning of democracy beyond the representative system, to redefine democratic participation beyond the ballot box, and to imagine a new political culture beyond race, ideology and political affiliation.

We have decided to be a part of this encampment because we believe in reclaiming public space and that the student movement, like any other, has the right to use this space for their cause. The movement has yet to decide if it supports the students' cause for free education or for PTPTN to be waived but stands in solidarity with their right to expression.

A series of free lectures known as Universiti Dataran Merdeka are run at night covering a wide range of topics. This is followed by the Kuala Lumpur People's Assembly which is also open to all. These assemblies are a space to deliberate any issues concerning the encampment as well as other issues of interest.

Occupy Dataran maintains that our presence at Dataran Merdeka is fully consistent with Article 10 of the Federal Constitution, where the people's freedom to assemble peacefully is provided for and protected.

Our presence has been peaceful and our conduct embodies the spirit of nonviolence.

As such, the actions taken by DBKL and the officers over the course of the last 10 days, constitute serious violations of the fundamental freedoms belonging to all Malaysians, including members of OccupyDataran, as enshrined in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

Released by

Occupy Dataran

24 April 2012

FAQ on OCCUPY DATARAN

Q: What is Occupy Dataran?

A: Occupy Dataran is an independent and autonomous grassroots initiative to reclaim Dataran Merdeka as an open and democratic space for people to gather, discuss and explore the true meaning of democracy beyond the representative system, to redefine democratic participation beyond the ballot box, and to imagine a new political culture beyond race, ideology and political affiliation.

Q: Who started it? And how did this idea come about?

A: Occupy Dataran was started by a group of people inspired by the 15-M movement in Spain, the grassroots movement that was calling for "Real Democracy Now" and adopting participatory democracy based on the popular assembly model. The idea to occupy Dataran Merdeka was developed during the first informal gathering of about 23 people, some friends and some strangers, at Dataran Merdeka on 30 July 2011.

Q: Is there a leader in Occupy Dataran?

A: In Occupy Dataran one does not look to one leader, but make space for all to be leaders. The group endeavours to organise itself in a democratic, horizontal and non-hierarchical manner. All roles such as moderators, minute-takers and coordinators, are rotated weekly.

Q: Who organizes the programs?

A: Anyone who joins Occupy Dataran can organize programs. There is no central organizing committee. Programs are organized on voluntary basis. Roles such as moderators, minute-takers and coordinators are rotated weekly.

Q: Who can join Occupy Dataran?

A: Occupy Dataran is open to all, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed, social class, political affiliation and ideology.

Q: What do you do in Occupy Dataran?

A: Past programmes have included the Universiti Rakyat (free, open-to-all informal workshops and lectures for people to share knowledge and skills), Pasar Percuma (a market of things and services offered for free), potluck picnics, music and theatre performances, poetry reading and more. The most consistent program is the KL People's Assembly.

Q: What is the KL People's Assembly?

A: The KL People's Assembly aims to be an open, egalitarian and democratic platform for people to share ideas, address problems, explore alternatives, propose solutions and make decisions on any issues. Decisions are made collectively through consensus decision-making and direct participatory democratic processes. Typically, the assembly runs from 8pm to 11pm, every Saturday.

Q: What does Occupy Dataran hope to achieve? What are your objectives?

A: Occupy Dataran and the KL People's Assembly can be seen as a laboratory where we experiment with a new kind of democracy that is more horizontal, that is more inclusive and participatory, where common people learn to deliberate and directly participate in decision-making, rather than arguing and delegating representatives to decide for us. The group chooses to occupy Dataran Merdeka because of the lack of democratic space and free public spaces in KL where these things can happen. It is a reclaiming and re-appropriation of Dataran Merdeka as a playground of ideas and activities, as a forum for deliberation, as an agora for democratic assemblies, as a platform for collective decision-making.

Q: What has Occupy Dataran achieved so far?

A: Occupy Dataran has consistently been held at Dataran Merdeka every week since the 30th of July and through the KL People's Assembly, have created a new democratic space and platform for common people from diverse backgrounds to come together to meet as equals, a space to listen and to be heard, a space to connect and share ideas, a space to discuss issues openly and intelligently, transcending beyond the racial, cultural, religious and ideological differences that are constantly being used to divide us.

Q: What's your connection with Occupy Wall Street?

A: While Occupy Dataran has no direct connection with Occupy Wall Street or any other Occupy movement in other cities throughout the world, there are some common threads. It is not in the demands and aims, but in the application of horizontal, anti-authoritarian and non-hierarchical structure, and also our commitment to consensus decision-making using direct participatory democratic processes through popular assemblies. Also in the occupation of public space as a means of reclaiming democratic space and building a new democratic people's movement from below.