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SOME 100 students from Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM) held a demonstration at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in Bangi last Friday demanding fair campus elections.

SMM (which is a coalition of several student organisations) president Hafizuddin Abirerah claimed that threats were made against certain students in campus elections held last year.

"Some were told they had to vote for certain candidates or they would be kicked out of their residential colleges," he said.

He also claimed there was outside interference in the campus elections and that e-voting was unfair.

"The demonstration is not meant to disrupt Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin's programme at UKM but we want other students to be aware of what we are doing," he told reporters who were at the university to cover the minister opening the national career carnival.

He said Badan Bertindak Mahasiswa Negara (which is part of the SMM) president Hilman Nordin managed to hand over a memorandum to the minister.

Hafizuddin who is a Universiti Malaya (UM) student, said those at the demonstration were from UM, UKM, Universiti Putra Malaysia and the International Islamic University Malaysia.

The demonstration started around 4pm outside the university's Dewan Canselor Tun Abdul Razak when Mohamed Khaled was visiting the booths set up for the carnival.

Groups of students were seen holding banners, with some calling for freer campus elections.

Police arrived at about 4.17pm and asked the crowd gathered around to disperse.

Mohamed Khaled had said last Tuesday that vice-chancellors had been given the autonomy to decide when to hold campus elections.

He said there was no reason for all public universities to hold campus elections simultaneously, which had been the norm in previous years.

Campus elections are usually held in October to elect members of the student

Fairer elections



The students demonstrating at the UKM campus in Bangi, demanding fair campus elections.

representative council for the next academic year. Speaking to reporters later, Mohamed Khaled said he had not had the chance to read the memorandum yet.

Asked whether what the students did was "healthy", he said they would claim it was undemocratic if they were not given an opportunity to do so.

"No action will be taken against them," he said, adding that he advised them to meet up with their respective university officials to discuss the issue.

"All public universities have to hold campus elections and they have until January next year to do so. Some of them said they could not hold the elections earlier as it coincided

with the Hari Raya and Deepavali festivals and end-of-term examinations," he said.

"No investigation on their claims will be carried out as the elections have yet to be held," he said.

Mohamed Khaled said the ministry would only get involved if the public universities did not hold the elections in January.