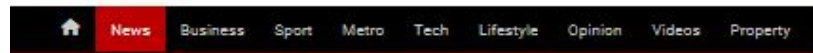


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Champion debater barred from speaking at universities

BY DANIAL ALBAKRI



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PETALING JAYA: Asia's best debater, Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman (*pic*), has been barred from speaking at two universities, allegedly on the grounds that he would bring in "external provocation."

"I am disappointed with the Higher Education Ministry's last minute intervention to stop me from speaking at Uniten (Universiti Tenaga Nasional) and USIM (Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia) due to an unsubstantiated 'controversy'.

"These are programs which have initially been approved by respective universities," the youth leader said in a Facebook post on Tuesday.

Syed Saddiq said his talk at Uniten was cancelled and the one at Usim was "postponed until the political scene gets better."



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He was scheduled to talk about the plight of the Palestinians, refugee crisis as well as volunteerism among the youth.

"I didn't know I could be a threat to university students by discussing about our brothers and sisters in Palestine," he said.

He called on Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh to look into the matter.

"As a reformer, this is very uncharacteristic of his office. I am sure that this can be resolved amicably," said Syed Saddiq.

Syed Sadiq, three-time winner of the Asian British Parliamentary (ABP) Debating Championship's Asia's Best Speaker award, was one of the signatories of the citizen's declaration that called for the resignation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The declaration, initiated by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was signed by opposition leaders and political activists.