



**Sahabat Alam Malaysia**  
**Friends of the Earth Malaysia**  
For Environmental Justice

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**Media Statement**

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**FISHERS IN SUNGAI KERIAN, NIBONG TEBAL, PENANG  
CONCERNED OF PRESENCE OF “KENKA” BOATS**

It is well known that river lobsters are the main catch for 200 to 300 riverine fishers in the Kerian River in Nibong Tebal regardless whether they are full time or part-time fishers. Their daily income and catch depend on the harvest from the river but at present their income seems to have been plundered and threatened by irresponsible parties.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) and Komuniti Nelayan Sungai Tanjung Berembang urge the Penang Fisheries Department, Seberang Perai City Council (MBSP), District & Land Office of Seberang Perai Selatan and the Irrigation and Drainage Department (DID) to conduct field visit and investigate the status of a fish landing platform operating in Sungai Tok Tuntong, Nibong Tebal. The platform has been built on the riverbank of Sungai Kerian and is very unsuitable with the surrounding environment.

The problems that have occurred over the past year have caused the riverine fishers here to worry about their safety, besides facing dwindling catch. The riverine fishers feel unsafe because the larger “kenka” boats frequently ply along the river, to and from the fish landing. The workshop to repair boats which is located next to the platform also increased the presence of “kenka” boats on the river.

SAM also learned that the boats carried trash fish to the landing platform to supply to aquaculture farms located behind the platform.

This platform is mainly used by "kenka" boats which are larger compared to the sampan or boats of the riverine fishers. The larger boats pose danger to many fishermen here who are angling or casting their nets. In addition, the waves caused by the "kenka" boats also contributed to riverbank erosion of the Kerian River and surrounding areas.

In addition, the fishers also complained regarding the boat repair workshop in the adjoining area which increased the number of “kenka” boats plying here and disrupted the riverine fishers activities. It is feared that untoward incidents such as accidents in the waters may occur. According to a fisherman in Tanjung Berembang, there was recently an accident involving a fiber boat carrying stock of trash fish that hit a fisherman's boat, splitting it in two.

SAM believes the authorities are aware of the existence of the fish landing platform as we were informed by the fisher community that they had reported this matter to the authorities ever since the platform was first constructed. What surprised the fishers here was how this platform was allowed to be built too close to the Kerian River, and even its structure is on the river bank.

We also questioned the land ownership status. Is it State land, river reserve, private land or under temporary occupancy license (TOL). SAM has written to the authorities regarding the status of the land here and is waiting for feedback.

In a survey conducted by the Tanjung Berembang riverine fisher community, they found that the development in the river reserve area seems to be increasing. Not only that, but there were times when the “kenka” boat owners were not bothered and contravened the law by casting their nets into the river. Although warned by the riverine fishers, the “kenka” boat operators do not care. The question is, are they immune for any action to be taken against them?

We also believe that all these activities related to the fish landing platform and “kenka” boats are detrimental to the environment and to the river ecosystem.

In this regard, we hope the relevant authorities will conduct surveillance and take appropriate action to resolve the issue. If no action is taken, we are concerned that the income of the riverine fishers will be affected and decline further. They will also face difficulties conducting their daily fishing activities.

**MEENAKSHI RAMAN**  
**President**  
**Sahabat Alam Malaysia**

Note to Editor: The location of the platform is at:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Nibong+Tebal,+Penang/@5.1588209,100.4422748,467m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x304ab04d86d99dab:0xac01d599802b06df!8m2!3d5.170128!4d100.4792231>