



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
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For Environmental Justice

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Media Statement

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**Encroachment And Illegal Cultivation In Part Of Compartments 37, 38 & 33,
Bukit Larut Forest Reserve In Larut Matang & Kuala Kangsar Forest Districts, Perak
(Central Forest Spine: Primary Linkage 10)**

During the period of the Movement Control Order it is highly probable for activities related to forest offences to escalate. Among the activities related to forest offences include entering a Permanent Reserved Forest (PRF) without a permit, and clearing or breaking up any land in the PRF for cultivation or any other purpose.

Based on information from the public and referring to coordinates in a topography map, it is suspected that forest clearing activities for agriculture are being carried out at part of Compartment 33 of Bukit Larut Forest Reserve (HS Bukit Larut) in the Forest District of Kuala Kangsar, Perak.

Part of Compartment 37 and Compartment 38 of HS Bukit Larut in the Larut Matang Forest District had been cleared long ago. Compartment 33 adjoins Compartment 37.

Although Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) had lodged complaints to the Perak Forestry Department regarding the illegal activities in the forest reserve since 2016 and the Department acknowledged that these activities have been happening since more than 20 years ago, we find that no stringent or drastic actions were taken by the Department to stop these illegal activities.

We are concerned that the legitimizing process suggested by the State Forestry Department by issuing use permits to the illegal settlers will encourage further encroachment in the surrounding area.

The issuance of use permits in this area will contradict the importance of the area as an ecological linkage area i.e. the Central Forest Spine: Primary Linkage 10.

Therefore SAM urges the State Forestry Department to take drastic action to curb the encroachment and illegal clearing and cultivation conducted by these irresponsible parties. This is in line with the theme of the International Day of Forests 2020 i.e. "Forest and Biodiversity: Too Precious to Lose" which was publicised by the Forestry Department yesterday.

SAM urges the Forestry Department to take the following urgent and stringent actions:

- > close the forest road accessed from the main road that leads to the illegal cultivation area by erecting a blockade or making trenches;
- > destroy the crops cultivated by the illegal settlers; and
- > destroy the electric fence erected by the illegal settlers.

Meenakshi Raman
President
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