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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**ILLEGAL QUARRY IN TELUK BAHANG SHOWS GROSS NEGLIGENCE  
BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES**

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is shocked to learn from media reports that an illegal granite quarry has been carrying out its activities despite the authorities knowing of its operations since 2016. According to media reports today (in the Star), the state government has known about the illegal quarry since its expose in May 2016.

Further, it has been reported that the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) had issued a stop-work notice in February and May this year but the operator continued to carry out the quarry works.

It is indeed mind-boggling and shocking that the government authorities have not acted with more urgency, despite the non-compliance by the quarry operator of the stop-work orders and the violation of all the relevant laws in place.

To compound matters, the illegal operations have been taking place partly on hill lands above 76m (250 ft.), which is contrary to the Penang Structure Plan, especially for activities of this sort which involves quarrying and blasting.

The quarry is also in an environmentally sensitive area quite close to the water-catchment forests and the Teluk Bahang dam.

How the quarry operator has been able to get away with such environmentally damaging activities in an environmentally sensitive area illegally for all these years raises very serious questions.

Why did the government authorities including the Penang state government which is responsible for quarrying activities under the National Land Code, as well as the MBPP, not take stern action urgently when the quarry operator was happily flouting the laws?

Clearly, the government inaction in taking stern and quick measures smacks of gross negligence on the part of the authorities who have allowed the illegal activities to continue. The quarry operator should have been charged and prosecuted for the illegal acts, with strong and deterrent punishment being pursued, instead of being allowed to carry on its works.

This is yet another case which goes to show that enforcement of the laws is lacking and poor in Penang, at all levels of the government. Beefing up the state and local governments' enforcement capacities has long been overdue!

We call on the Penang state government and the MBPP to buck up and take urgent action to stop the illegal quarry, and haul the operator to court, and push for a jail sentence.

The quarry operator should also be required to rehabilitate and restore the area which has been ravaged by the quarry works. Urgent and stern action should be forthcoming now, and the authorities should not be waiting for yet another media expose before acting!

Ms. Meenakshi Raman  
President  
Sahabat Alam Malaysia