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Press Release

27 June 2019

**Pasir Gudang Chemical Pollution – Call For
Royal Commission Of Enquiry**

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) calls on the Federal Government to set up a Royal Commission of Enquiry (RCE) into the recent spate of chemical pollution in Pasir Gudang, Johor, that has resulted in more than 100 students from more than 30 schools to have fallen ill.

Further, according to press reports, the Education Ministry has closed 475 institutions of learning to enable the authorities to address the source of the problem.

Given the gravity and seriousness of the incidents, an RCE is vital to ensure that all those responsible for the human and environmental damage caused are taken to task.

The enquiry should also include the Sungai Kim Kim pollution, although the authorities have charged some companies responsible for waste dumping activities.

This is to enable comprehensive investigations in the public interest, to identify the root causes of the chemical pollution, including in ascertaining the culprits responsible for the damage caused, as well as in determining the culpability or negligence of the various authorities who have allowed the pollution to occur.

In addition, such an RCE should look into the adequacy of current laws as well as the capabilities and capacities of our enforcement authorities so as to make recommendations and take measures that will help safeguard public welfare, health and safety in the future.

This will not only include an enquiry into the current relevant environmental laws, but also guidelines and regulations dealing with the planning and siting of industrial estates, especially of toxic and chemical factories, close to schools, residential areas and areas frequented by the public.

Further, it is vital to ascertain how the victims of such pollution are treated and responded to, including into whether they have been sufficiently taken care of in terms of ensuring their health and well-being both in the short and longer term due to the effects of the pollution.

Since prevention is better than cure, the RCE will be important so that we have the proper measures and protocols in place to avert another Pasir Gudang episode anywhere else in the country.

Ms. Meenakshi Raman
President
Sahabat Alam Malaysia