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Press Statement

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A Commission of Inquiry should be set up for the landslide tragedy in Batang Kali

SAM is shocked to learn about the horrific landslide tragedy in Batang Kali which has claimed several lives including children. Time and again we have been warning about allowing earthworks and other forms of activities on highlands and hillslopes which are environmentally sensitive areas.

The root causes of the tragedy must be investigated and publicly disclosed.

How was a campsite allowed on a hilly area? Photographs showed that a major slope failure has occurred under the highway nearby in the upper reaches of the site. What triggered that to happen?

There should be a moratorium in place on all further hillslope developments until there is a thorough review of how vulnerable or resilient these areas are to increased intensity and frequency of rainfalls due to climate change.

We are working in uncharted and unprecedented times where climate change impacts are only now unfolding. We cannot continue with business as usual approaches which are piecemeal, allowing activities on hillslopes.

The government must expedite the National Adaptation Plan to understand the vulnerable and high risk areas to climate impacts and take urgent measures to build climate resilience.

Those responsible for the deaths of victims at the Batang Kali tragedy must be brought to book. A Commission of Inquiry must be conducted to get to the root causes and for preventive and remedial measures.

Meenakshi Raman
President
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