



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
Friends of the Earth Malaysia
For Environmental Justice

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Press Release

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SAM condemns barring of its President from Sarawak

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) strongly condemns the denial of entry into Miri, Sarawak of its President, Meenakshi Raman, today, 29 September 2026. Meena arrived at the Miri Airport on a 2.40 pm flight, which landed at approximately 4.50 pm, but was stopped and refused entry by Sarawak Immigration.

At the immigration counter, Meena's identity card was taken and she was asked whether she was involved in any case. Approximately 15 minutes later, immigration officers informed her that a report had been lodged against her on 21 May 2025. She was then asked whether she had received any letter from the Sarawak authorities. Meena had received no such letter, notice, explanation or prior indication that she had been prohibited from entering Sarawak. Had she been informed of any such restriction, she would not have boarded the flight.

This is an unacceptable and profoundly disturbing exercise of state power. As a Malaysian citizen and President of one of the country's oldest environmental organisations, Meena was denied entry without being informed of the reasons for the decision or afforded an opportunity to respond, raising serious concerns regarding procedural fairness. This is particularly alarming when Meena was permitted to enter Sarawak as recently as 2024.

SAM has worked in Sarawak for decades and maintains an office in Marudi. Its work is rooted in supporting grassroots communities, particularly indigenous peoples, farmers and fishers to defend their territories, livelihoods and environment from destructive development. SAM's Marudi office is responsible for the organisation's work on indigenous community issues in Sarawak.

Every citizen has a right to freedom of movement. While Sarawak has powers relating to entry from other parts of Malaysia, such power is not a licence for arbitrary exclusion.

SAM therefore demands that the Sarawak Government and the relevant immigration authorities immediately:

- State the precise legal basis for barring Meena from Sarawak;
- Disclose the nature, source and basis of the barring;
- Explain why she was not notified in advance about this ban; and
- Immediately revoke any restriction imposed against her.

The Federal Government must not remain silent. The arbitrary exclusion of environmental and human-rights defenders from a part of their own country strikes at democratic accountability, civic space and the public's right to speak out on environmental destruction and the rights of affected communities. Activists must be able to undertake legitimate public interest work without any intimidation and harassment.

Mageswari Sangaralingam
Hon. Secretary
On behalf of
SAM Central Committee