



## **JARINGAN ORANG ASAL SEMALAYSIA**

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES NETWORK OF MALAYSIA

Lot 5, 1st Floor, Block M • Donggongon • 89500 Penampang, Sabah  
**Mailing address:** P.O. Box 511 • 89507 Penampang, Sabah, Malaysia  
**Tel:** +6088 726413 • **Fax:** +6088 718669 • **Email:** joasmalaysia@gmail.com

### **For Immediate Release**

### **Orang Asal representative got kicked out from participating a public forum**

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Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS) strongly condemns the discriminating act by the Prime Minister's Department in dispeeling a community representative from participating in the public forum that was organised by the department that aims to gather information and feedbacks on numerous issues so as to understand and resolve the perennial problems of the people.

Nicholas Mujah, a representative of the Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA) was asked to leave the forum for no apparent reason by the organisers.

The Sarawak Lab, part of the national circuit, was held on 9 February 2010, at Pullman Hotel Kuching and was chaired by Idris Jala.

Participants include senior government officers consisting of officers from various ministries, Resident and District Officers and the Sarawak Attorney General. Various plantation companies were also present as well as community chiefs and a few individuals who were interested in the public forum. Participants took part in three discussion labs; socio economic, native customary rights (NCR) and the Native Court.

One of the feedbacks from the NCR group was given by Hassan Sui who addressed the disputes caused by the lack of accountability and transparency of government agencies such as the Land and Survey Department as well as plantation companies such as Pelita, and shared his recommendations. Another feedback by Temenggong Stephen Jussem stated that the ongoing manipulation and intimidation against the Tuai Rumahs to certify native land and boundaries, should stop.

Mujah had already participated for the first part of the forum in the morning session. During the morning tea break, he was pulled by one of the organisers to room and was told to leave the forum as the event is only for invited participants and government officials.

Mujah protested that the forum is for the public and continued to insist that he should be in the forum. However, the organisers later told Mujah that the directive to eject him out of the forum came from the top.

The organisers of the forum were wrong in ejecting Mujah out. Mujah, a well-known community representative and NCR activist, in advocating Orang Asal rights plays an important role in providing feedback as well as recommendations for this public forum. He should not be stopped from attending the forum, unless the Prime

Minister's Department is not serious in addressing this issue and this event is just another window dressing for the public.

JOAS questions the accountability of the public forum that does not include the participation of a community representative and organisers that lacks of responsibility to be inclusive of all *rakyat* so as to ensure a transparent and open public forum to discuss upon the most important issues that are faced by the indigenous peoples of Sarawak today.

Until the government moves forward towards a meaningful solution with the full and effective participation and consent of the Orang Asal as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), NCR land disputes will continue to take place throughout the state, to the detriment of the rights of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak, the sustainable development of the Sarawakian population and the image of the state of Sarawak and Malaysia, contrary to the spirit of 1Malaysia.

Yours truly,

Adrian Banie Lasimbang  
President  
Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS)  
Indigenous Peoples network of Malaysia  
[joasmalaysia@gmail.com](mailto:joasmalaysia@gmail.com)

For more information please contact:

Nicholas Muijah  
Secretary General,  
Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA)

Contact no. 016-8946976