



BRIMAS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KUCHING - Prominent land rights and human rights lawyer, Harrison Ngau Laing was stopped and quizzed by Immigration and Special Branch Police officers while he was trying to board a plane to Kuala Lumpur at Kuching International Airport.

When Harrison inquired the Immigration and Special Branch officers as to why he is being stopped, he only received a reply that it was orders from the top.

"I asked them why am I stopped from traveling to Kuala Lumpur. They only told me that they were following orders", said Harrison.

Harrison is expected to attend a Roundtable Meeting on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in Kuala Lumpur. He is also attending another meeting with senior lawyers regarding IOI and the Sarawak Government's appeal on the landmark court decision involving TK Lah Anyie and his villagers of Long Teran Kanan, Tinjar, Baram.

"After explaining to the officers on the purpose of my trip, they finally let me go albeit apologetically", said Harrison.

This is not the first time Harrison was stopped and quizzed by the authorities while trying to travel out of Sarawak.

In the late eighties, Harrison passport was impounded by the state immigration authorities for the reason of national security because Harrison was active in the anti-logging movement in Sarawak and highlighting the plight of the indigenous Penan overseas.

Only in 2003, did Harrison manage to get his passport back but his movement inside and outside the country is constantly being monitored by the Special Branch.

Mark Bujang, Executive Director of Borneo Resources Institute (BRIMAS) condemns the latest attempt by the state authorities to restrict the movement of human rights and indigenous peoples' activist.

"Looks like Sarawak Land Development Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. James Masing pledge that the State Government's is willing to engage with NGOs is already beginning to sound hollow", said Mark.

"The state government is reverting to its old tactics of intimidating and restricting activists from traveling abroad. Until now, they are a few Sarawakian activists that are not allowed to travel outside the country.

Also, a few of our activist friends from Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah are not allowed to enter Sarawak. This is clearly a violation of our constitutional rights and also breaches the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which Malaysia has agreed to adopt at the United Nations", added Mark.

Statement release by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Bujang', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

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Mark Bujang
Executive Director