

SUARA RAKYAT MALAYSIA (SUARAM)

(Suara Inisiatif Sdn Bhd Reg. No. 562530-P)
B-G-15, Pusat Perniagaan Seksyen 8, Jalan Sungai Jernih 8/1,
46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.
Tel: +603-7954 5724 Fax: +603-7954 5725
Email: suaram@suaram.net Web: www.suaram.net



For Immediate Release
21 February 2017

Conviction of Lena Hendry Another Blow to Freedom of Expression!

Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) finds the decision to convict Lena Hendry by the magistrate court under Section 6(1)(b) of the Film Censorship Board regrettable and flawed in nature.

The absence of adequate evidence led to Lena's initial acquittal was sound as there was a lack of evidence on part of the prosecution in their charges. The subsequent conviction of Lena on 21st February depart from this and utilized the flawed system in Malaysia which undo the presumption of innocence that serve as the foundation of any common law based criminal justice system. Convicting the defense based on their inability to prove beyond reasonable doubt of their innocence remains a blatant transgression against the right to fair trial and Lena's conviction marks another injustice by the Malaysian criminal justice system.

On top of the manifest injustice in her conviction, the attempt to punish an individual for screening a documentary is reprehensible on many levels. A documentary is often made to serve as a historical record of an event that transpired and leaves a legacy or story that can be viewed by the future generations. Censoring or preventing documentaries from being screened does not protect the public but only serve to protect select groups by hiding an inconvenient truth and deprive future generations of important knowledge on history.

Furthermore an attempt to punish an individual for allegedly screening 'No Fire Zone' is contemptible to say the least as the act of preventing the screening tantamounts to protecting those who may have committed crime against humanity. if the Malaysian government seeks to protect others against genocide and crime against humanity, why is it now complicit in protecting those who may have committed crime against humanity.

SUARAM reiterate our strongest condemnation against the repression of freedom of expression by the Malaysian government and stand in solidarity with Lena Hendry in her fight for human rights and democracy!

In Solidarity

Sevan Doraisamy
Executive Director
SUARAM