



Malaysia: Stop intimidation and harassment of SUARAM Executive Director, Sevan Doraisamy

(15 October 2019, Bangkok) – The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and Asia Democracy Network (AND), on behalf of their members, express solidarity with Sevan Doraisamy, the Executive Director of Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) and Executive Committee member of FORUM-ASIA, as he faces intimidation and harassment from the Kangar Police.

On 11 October 2019, the Kangar Police Chief, Wari Kiew filed a defamation report, under Section 500 of the Penal Code and Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act, against Doraisamy over comments made during a press conference that a father and son had been wrongfully detained and tortured the previous month.¹

On 21 September 2019, Police had arrested Pukalanthee and his son, Linggerswaran over a kidnapping report involving a 15-year old. The two were held without bail and were not provided the reason for their arrest until the next day.

Along with local civil society in Malaysia, we call on the Kangar Police Chief to withdraw his complaint, and instead conduct an investigation over allegations the Police violated the rights of the two individuals.

FORUM-ASIA and ADN echo the call of fourteen civil society organisations in Malaysia to repeal its criminal defamation laws, as these violate freedom of expression and have been used to target human rights defenders.² This recent case also highlights the need for an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission to ensure Police refrain from abusing their power.

FORUM-ASIA and ADN have been witness to the integrity and credibility of both Doraisamy and SUARAM in their human rights work, including their efforts to promoting accountability from the Government. Doraisamy has been subjected to several instances of intimidation, including police questioning in December 2018 over his involvement with an activist group.³ The Police and other sectors of the Government must refrain from using these tactics, and instead support an enabling environment for all human rights defenders. The Pakatan Harapan Government must ensure it abides by the reform agenda it promised its people, if it is to retain the trust it has been granted.

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¹ <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/495523>

² <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/10/12/civil-society-groups-condemn-kangar-police-chief-for-lodging-report-against/1799728>

³ <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2018/12/06/suarams-sevan-doraisamy-quizzed-over-activists-article/>