

## **Tian Chua: Barring me from Sabah an abuse of power**

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**By Ram Anand**

PKR vice-president Tian Chua says the Sabah government's ban on him from entering the state is an abuse of power.

The move is a dangerous precedent to ban political opponents from entering the state, said Tian Chua, who was deported back to Kuala Lumpur yesterday, shortly after arriving at the Kota Kinabalu airport.

"They did not give any reason for preventing me from entering the state. It's election time now, the state government cannot ban anyone it sees fit," he said at a press conference at the PKR headquarters in Tropicana, Petaling Jaya, today.

Tian Chua admitted that Sabah does have powers, under the federal constitution, to ban any West Malaysian from entering the state for security reasons. However, he contended, this could not be applied to politicians during elections.

Spell out power of state on this, EC urged

"During elections, there should be fair space for campaigning for all parties," he said.

He urged the Election Commission to spell out the powers of the state government on this matter, now that Parliament and the state assemblies (except for Sarawak) have been dissolved.

Unconfirmed speculation is that Tian Chua's ban from the state could have stemmed from his comments on the Lahad Datu incursion, as reported by PKR organ Keadilan Daily, in which he is alleged to have said that the incursion was an Umno "sandiwara" (drama).

"That's a matter for the court to decide. But even if I'm found guilty, the law doesn't say Sabah can ban anyone with a criminal record," he said.

However, there is "too little time" for him to pursue legal avenues to try and lift the ban in view of the fast approaching 13th general election, Tian Chua added.

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