

Ampang MP quizzed by cops in Kuching over Penan rape
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Ampang parliamentarian Zuraida Kamaruddin has had her statement recorded by Sarawak police as part of the latter's ongoing probe into allegations of previous reports of sexual exploitation of the Penan women in Baram.

NONE Zuraida, who was summoned by Sarawak police to assist in their investigations, had her statement recorded at the state police headquarters at Kuching today.

The PKR Wanita chief said the police officers then invited her and her lawyer Soo Chee How to accompany the police team to the Penan settlement next Wednesday to continue their probe but she declined the invitation.

"This is too short a notice and they (the police) have not made adequate preparations to carry out the investigation," she said.

When contacted by Malaysiakini, Sarawak CID chief SAC Huzir Mohamed said police will still continue looking into the matter allegations which include those of rape.

NONE He urged members of the public to come forward and lodge a police report if they had information regarding the case.

The two-part meeting today first saw a dialogue between Zuraida, her lawyer and 12 other senior police officers.

Present were Sarawak PKR Wanita chief Ibi Uding, Sarawak PKR's Information Chief See Chee How, Sarawak PKR Wanita deputy chief Norsham Abu Samah, indigenous women's rights group (Wadesa) representative Minang Akganda and DAP Pendiang assemblyperson Violet Yong.

Several summoned

On her police statement recorded, Zuraida said she was questioned on her knowledge of the Penan Support Group report. After having her statement recorded, she said she then lodged a police report in support of the Penan women involved.

bukit antarabangsa landslide 071209 zuraida kamaruddin Zuraida (left) added that Sarawak police informed her that she may be called back as a witness.

Sarawak police had summoned several individuals, including Zuraida, on July 13 to assist with investigations following the release of the report entitled 'A wider context of sexual exploitation of Penan women and girls in Middle and Ulu Bernam, Sarawak' distributed by the Penan Support Group.

The hardhitting report claimed that sexual crimes were 'allowed to flourish' in Baram because of widespread poverty, deprivation of land rights, citizenship and basic services as well as the lack of respect for rural communities, their autonomy and their calls for justice.

Seven rape cases were said to involve Penan women in Ulu Baram with the suspects said to be loggers of the powerful plantation companies.

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