

**Bersih leader barred from Sarawak**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 — Bersih steering committee member Maria Chin Abdullah was stopped from entering Sarawak this morning, according to the electoral reform group.

“She was supposed to take a flight from LCCT, Kuala Lumpur to Kuching to meet up with the Bersih 2.0 local group in Sarawak.

“Immigration of Sarawak would like to send Maria Chin Abdullah back to Kuala Lumpur as soon as possible,” it said in a press statement.

She is the third Bersih leader to be stopped from entering the state.

Bersih chief Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan was refused entry during the state polls last April and the High Court ruled against her in August when she tried to challenge the state government’s decision.

Sarawak and Sabah are allowed to deny entry, even to Malaysians, under the agreement to form Malaysia in 1963 with Malaya and Singapore, but must give a reason for doing so.

Ambiga was stopped at the Kuching International Airport on April 15, but no reasons were given as to why she was barred from entering the hornbill state where she was to monitor the polling process the next day.

The former Malaysian Bar president was travelling with two other Bersih 2.0 committee members — Subramaniam Pillay, a member of Aliran, and Arul Prakash, a programme officer of Komas — and Ivy Josiah, executive director of the Women’s Aid Organisation.

The trio were allowed in.

Maria joins a list of activists who also include Steven Ng, Cynthia Gabriel, Wong Chin Huat, Johan Tan and PKR’s Subang MP Sivarasa Rasiah, who were denied entry to the state in the days leading up to the state election where the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) easily obtained a majority.

Long-serving Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud has not responded to criticisms about denying entry to Malaysian activists while Putrajaya has also remained silent over a citizen’s right to free movement within the federation since the hornbill state formed Malaysia with Malaya, Sabah and Singapore in 1963.

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bersih-leader-barred-from-sarawak/>