

Tian Chua barred from entering Sabah
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 7 — PKR vice-president Chua Tian Chang was stopped this morning by immigration officials at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport (KKIA) and immediately bundled on the next flight home without reason.

The Batu MP, who was recently charged with sedition after allegedly linking the Lahad Datu invasion to Umno, confirmed with The Malaysian Insider at 11.40am that he was returning to Kuala Lumpur from KKIA.

"In flight back now," he said in an SMS.

"No reason given," he added, when asked if the immigration officials had explained why they had blocked his entry into Sabah.

In a statement from PKR's headquarters, it was confirmed the lawmaker popularly called Tian Chua was held back at the entry point in KKIA and subsequently informed that the state government had issued an order denying him entry.

Earlier, Chua had tweeted about his airport detention, saying: "Detained at Kota Kinabalu airport by Immigration, Sabah Govt refuses my entry & to be sent back to KL".

According to Sabah-based PKR deputy secretary-general Darell Leiking, Chua was in Kota Kinabalu to attend two ceramah events — one in Tuaran at 3pm and another in Penampang at 7pm.

The Penampang PKR chief slammed the detention and asked if the authorities feared Chua's presence in Sabah.

"What have we become that the authorities are so afraid of Tian Chua?" he said in a statement sent via text message.

"The illegal immigrants are allowed to wander our streets happily without detection and yet a real genuine Malaysian is blocked from entering the state!" he added.

Chua was charged on March 14 with sedition for purportedly making statements that the Sulu invasion of Lahad Datu was allegedly a planned conspiracy by the Umno government to divert the people's attention and frighten them, and that the incident raised doubts over the Umno government's "wayang mainan" (shadow play).

In the same charge sheet that was read out in court, Chua was also alleged to have said that the intrusion into Lahad Datu is only the government's sandiwara (drama) to frighten the people into thinking Sabah was not peaceful.

He is also accused of saying there was a conspiracy by the Umno government to divert the attention of Sabahans, particularly over the issuing of identity cards to foreigners.

The PKR leader claimed trial to the charge, insisting that it was politically-motivated.

"I will fight this slander to clear my name," the PKR vice-president had told the Sessions

Court.

His lawyer, N. Surendran, told the Sessions Court judge Mohamad Sekeri Mamat that he will file an application in the High Court to strike out the charge against Chua, claiming that this was an abuse of process and politically-motivated.

If convicted, Chua faces a fine of up to RM5,000 and jail term of up to three years or both as this is his first offence, but may be jailed for up to five years for subsequent offences.

He was later released on a RM5,000 bail. The Sessions Court also fixed April 12 for mention.

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