ACKNOWLEDGMENT

SAM would like to thank all staff, members, volunteers, friends, donors, funders and the media for all your support. SAM would like to thank Amelia Collins of FoEI and all SAM staff for graciously allowing us to use their photographs for this report.
IN A NUTSHELL

2018 was a significant year for Malaysia, with the national elections that changed the political landscape of the country. The non-stop myriad of activities under various projects from the beginning of the year kept all SAM staff busy. Some of the major issues SAM handled in 2018 included:

- Lynas - to remove radioactive waste from Malaysia
- Plastic waste trade and dumping
- Reclamation projects - proposed and ongoing (Penang, Perak, Kedah)
- Road projects in Penang - PIL1, three major roads
- Development on hill slopes in Penang, Perak, Kedah, etc
- Trawler encroachments into coastal fishing zone
- Land rights of indigenous communities in Sarawak & Peninsular Malaysia
- Expansion of plantations and development of monoculture plantations in permanent reserved forests
- Destruction to mangroves
- Sand mining, quarrying, mining
- Wildlife trade, zoos and abuse of animals

We also commented on the Draft Penang State Structure Plan, EIA of the proposed Pan Island Link 1 (PIL1) Highway Project, Penang and other local plans in the state of Perak.

SAM’s main activities in 2018 were carried out under the following work heads:

- Protection and conservation of forest and coastal ecosystems;
- Defending indigenous communities customary territories through awareness raising, capacity building and agroecology activities;
- Advocating and lobbying for better policies and laws in relation to environment, wildlife, indigenous, rural and local communities; and
- Raising public awareness on the environment through media.

Our activities included conducting awareness raising programmes among rural and local communities, meeting and having dialogues with local, state and federal authorities, workshop on constructing fishing gears, preparing and submitting letters, petitions and memoranda to the government, supporting community actions, planting coastal and mangrove trees and producing various forms of publication in both print and digital, among others.
SAM conducted five capacity building trainings on rights and territories. A total of 35 women and 142 men attended these workshops and were trained. They comprise of fisher groups, settlers indigenous communities, activists, local communities fighting destructive development projects specifically in forests near their settlements.

The organisations/communities were trained with the objective to recognise what fundamental rights and territories are and how they affect and impact their daily lives whether as an individual or as a community. These trainings were conducted in the states of Perak, Pahang, Johor and Sarawak throughout the year. These trainings elicited some good feedback from participants which included, among others, the following:

- The training agenda which stressed on fundamental rights and defending territories was of interest to participants and the interactive sessions facilitated in enhancing their knowledge on the issue.
- Presentation of content was different and participants were able to engage in all sessions without much difficulty and the interactive sessions enable everyone to speak.
- The communities learned how to conduct monitoring, documentation and collect evidence for the purpose of defending their rights and territories.
- A good mix of youth, women and older activist is needed to enable exchange of ideas on actions to be taken.
- The involvement of women in these workshops strengthens the community in pursuit of their struggle.
WORKSHOP ON HOW TO MAKE FISHING GEARS

SAM conducted a workshop on how to make fishing gears such as pukat ikan and bubu ketam/udang lipan in Kampung Nelayan, Kuala Kurau, Perak on 4 August 2018. A total of 26 participants, comprising of 24 men and 2 women attended the workshop. Four trainers (resource persons) including two fishers from Batu Kawan demonstrated how to make bubu to trap crabs or mantis prawns. Two other resource persons from Pontian, Johor taught the fisherfolk how to make pukat ikan (fish trap). Upon returning home, the fisherfolk tried out the fish traps that they had made. By making their own nets, the fisherfolk save cost for input.
MEMORANDA SUBMITTED

Three memoranda were submitted to the government in 2018. The 14th General Elections of the country held in May 2018 saw a change in the government. SAM took this opportunity to lobby and advocate for policy reforms. SAM prepared and submitted a document to the Committee for Institutional Reforms on 30 June 2018. The contents of this document were based on SAM’s extensive expertise and experience as a grassroots environmental organisation. The contents largely focused on a host of environmental governance and justice issues, where specific institutional reforms and reviews need to be undertaken systematically in order to ensure improved protection of our ecosystems and natural resources and the upholding of the rights of our indigenous peoples.

The second one SAM submitted was urging for a ban on trawling to protect our fisheries resources. This was submitted on 15 November 2018 to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries Department, Fisheries Development Board and Maritime Enforcement Agency. SAM has been receiving responses from the authorities and both SAM and fisher group (JARING) were invited for a meeting in December 2018 by LKIM. The Minister of Agriculture met SAM and JARING in January 2019 to discuss issues we have raised.

The third memorandum was on plastic waste crisis, calling on a ban on plastic waste import. SAM followed up on this memorandum submitted in November 2018 and also liaised with local communities, local and foreign media to highlight the issue.

MEETINGS AND DIALOGUES BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND RELEVANT AUTHORITIES

There were 5 meetings and 1 roundtable dialogue organised by SAM with various fisher folks and rural and indigenous communities with the relevant authorities including law and policy makers. Many of these meetings led to a number of concrete outcomes.

🌟 Kerian fishermen met with Northern Region Maritime Enforcement Agency (APMM)

A total of 25 fishermen from the Kerian district in Perak participated in a meeting with 10 officers from APMM on January 07, 2018.

The meeting was requested by JARING (fisher group established by SAM) and Komuniti Nelayan Kuala Kurau whom wanted clarification regarding enforcement activities on encroachment of kenka boats, use of destructive gears such as Apollo nets, bubu naga and other arising issues. APMM agreed with the fishermen that licensing of kenka boats must be revoked by 2020. The fishermen appealed that APMM help them raise these issues with the higher authorities.
Kerian fishermen met with the Director General of Fisheries

On April 11, 2018 the heads of units of fisher community in Kerian District met with the Director General of Fisheries, Dato’ Munir, Perak State Secretary Dato’ Seri Abdul Fuhad and officers of the Fisheries Department in Parit 30, Kuala Kurau. The coastal fishermen appealed to the authorities to take action against encroachment of Apollo vessels into their fishing zone A. The meeting elicited positive responses whereby the Fisheries Department started enforcement activities in the area where the role was previously given to the APMM.

Roundtable dialogue with fisheries related agencies

SAM conducted a dialogue in RECSAM, Penang on 01 November, 2018 to raise issues of concern of coastal fishers. The dialogue was attended by 23 fishers. There were six representatives from the agencies, from APMM, LKIM Penang and Fisheries Dept Director from Penang and Director of Fisheries Resource Management, Putrajaya. SAM and the fishermen raised our concern about the deterioration of fishery resources because of massive destruction to marine ecosystems as well as decline in certain species of fish with high commercial value. After the dialogue, we conducted a press conference urging the government not to yield to pressure from any parties to withdraw the ban on trawling by 2020. This was in relation to us receiving information on the efforts being made to extend the date of ban on trawling. The press coverage was very good with all the major media carrying our statement.

Meeting with Minister of Works in Kuala Lumpur

As a result of our submission to the Committee for Institutional Reforms, SAM received an invitation for a courtesy call to meet the Minister of Works on September 07. The minister has been an ally to many civil society groups in Sarawak as he is a renowned indigenous customary land rights lawyer from the state, whom we have had a strong relationship with for over more than a decade. The minister is also a Sarawak state law and policy maker, where he remains in the opposition bloc. The meeting was focused on the indigenous customary land rights, in light of our history of working together.

Meeting with Sarawak federal lawmakers in Kuching, Sarawak

SAM received an invitation from BERSIH to participate in a civil society meeting with Sarawak federal lawmakers. We requested to be put in the indigenous customary land rights cluster group. Three lawmakers from the ruling coalition participated in the meeting. For this meeting, we submitted a paper on the protection of native customary rights in Sarawak, which recommends a series of specific statutory amendments. During the meeting, we argued for the urgency of the appropriate statutory reforms on the indigenous customary land rights, the prevention of rent seeking behaviour in land development and timber production activities and the adoption and implementation of the recommendations made by the report of the SUHAKAM national inquiry.
Annual meeting with Sarawak state lawmakers and a press conference in Miri, Sarawak

The meeting was participated by two Sarawak state lawmakers and a leader of a political party set to contest in the next Sarawak state election and 43 participants from communities and civil society groups. The purpose of the annual meeting was to discuss issues to be raised by the lawmakers during the end of year sitting of the Sarawak state legislature.

For SAM, this meeting was focused on discussing the plight of the Puyut-Lubuk Nibung communities in Marudi and the Nanga Seridan community in Tinjar on the encroachment of oil palm plantations into native customary lands. The political party leader, who is also a lawyer involved in many land rights defence activities, offered his analysis on the matter and clarified that the gazetting of land under customary claims as a development area under the land law, did not mandatorily require that the new concept development model would be utilised.

The land may also be freely developed for an oil palm plantation privately owned by a project proponent, without participation of the landowners in a joint-venture company. This confirmed the views of some community members who by mid-2018, were already convinced that the oil palm plantation project concerned would not involve the new concept model. A representative from Save Rivers was also invited to brief the lawmakers on the need to advocate for renewable energies for decentralised indigenous populations, and the continued need to oppose the plan to build more large hydroelectric dams in Sarawak.

The meeting ended with a press conference with SAM, community representatives and the two lawmakers, urging for the state legislature to question the land rights violations in Marudi and Tinjar during its next sitting.
SOLIDARITY ACTIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

SAM took part in solidarity actions with indigenous communities in Gua Musang, Kelantan, Pahang and Perak.

The indigenous community (Orang Asli) of Temiar tribe in Ulu Kelantan, located in the district of Gua Musang in the state of Kelantan are defending their customary land from being converted for logging, mining and conversion into plantations. The communities are facing human rights abuses, of which their livelihood is threatened as their customary land and foraging area are being destroyed by State approved activities for resource extraction and monoculture plantations.

Failing to get favourable response from the State for their plight, the community decided to defend their customary land. Since 15 February 2018, the Orang Asli community had set up several blockades in Cawas, Simpor, Kampung Kuala Wok in the Gua Musang District.

SAM staff visited the community on 23 and 24 February 2018 and listened to the plight of the community and advised them on their rights. SAM also recorded an interview, documenting the communities’ demands.

The Federal government of Malaysia has taken an interest on the rights of the Orang Asli (indigenous people) of Peninsular Malaysia. A civil suit was filed by the Attorney General's Chambers against the Kelantan state government to seek the legal recognition of the native land rights of the Temiar Orang Asli in Pos Simpor, Gua Musang, Kelantan.

SAM staff also visited indigenous communities affected by development in Pahang and Perak to show our solidarity and bring to fore the issues they were facing.

Besides SAM staff going on solidarity missions, SAM trained activists to also show solidarity and assist indigenous communities who were affected by development projects or exploration activities in their territories.

It was heart-warming to see non Orang Asli standing in solidarity with the Orang Asli of Kg Sg Baru who were fighting a relocation project as a result of a pineapple project.
Solidarity actions with the communities in Gua Musang and Pahang
PLANTING OF COASTAL AND MANGROVE TREES

A total of 1,500 mangrove saplings were planted by 240 participants in Peninsular Malaysia. Following is a table showing the breakdown of saplings planted, the areas and the number of participants that took part during each planting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Type / No. of saplings</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03 March 2018</td>
<td>Hutan Simpan Byram, Seberang Perai Selatan, Penang</td>
<td>400 Bakau Minyak</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 July 2018</td>
<td>Kg Pandak Putih, Kuala Kurau, Kerian, Perak</td>
<td>400 Bakau Minyak</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 July 2018</td>
<td>Hutan Lipur Pasir Panjang, Manjung, Perak</td>
<td>100 Tembusu, Ambong-Ambong</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October 2018</td>
<td>Sg Labu, Tanjung Plandang, Kerian, Perak</td>
<td>400 Bakau Minyak, Berus Tumu Merah</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 December 2018</td>
<td>Hutan Simpan Merbok, Kedah</td>
<td>300 Bakau Minyak</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 December 2018</td>
<td>Kuala Tunjang, Kerpan, Kedah</td>
<td>300 Bakau Minyak, Api-Api</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These saplings were planted with the help of the Kampung Bagan Buaya community, Unit Nelayan Changkat, Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA), staff of Sek Keb. Keledang Jaya, Changkat, JARING Perak, staff and students of Politeknik Sultanah Bahiyah, Kulim, students and lecturers of USM, local community and the Forestry Department of Perak, Sekretariat Rakan Muda Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Sungai Merbok fisher community as well as the local and fisher community of Kuala Tunjang.
AGROECOLOGY PROJECT IN SARAWAK

SAM continued to maintain its nursery and agroecology centre in Kg Lubok Nibong. We also assisted in setting up nurseries run by communities of Kg Sungai Buri, Long Miri and Long Pilah. Seeds were collected by the communities from healthy trees. Some trees flower abundantly during particular seasons. Seeds collected must be fresh and not damaged. The participating communities found that the change in climate had affected flowering of forest tree species in certain locations. Thus seed sharing and selling was introduced in the project.

The community in Kg Sungai Buri had sourced merbau and jelayan rattan seeds. The community in Marudi had sourced engkabang seeds whilst the community in Long Miri had sourced species of meranti. Long Pilah community also collected seeds of fruit trees such as durian and langsat. Seeds were then sown in polybags filled with healthy soil. Germinated seedlings were kept in the nursery before transplanting. Overall, the number of saplings surpassed 3,000.

The forest tree saplings were then planted in the NCR land of the communities and also sold to other communities.

SAM also held an agroecology exhibition at the end of 2018 where we brought together about 5 residents’ associations in Miri to exhibit what they have done under this project with SAM showcasing our products from our nursery. Many communities shared their handicrafts, saplings and herbs they grew in their nursery and other household products made from the natural resources from the forest. The exhibition also had an experienced farmer from Peninsular Malaysia demonstrating the different ways of producing organic fertilisers.
Mr Kanniyapan demonstrating the ways in which to make organic fertiliser

Ajeng Ngau Wan explaining the uses of medicinal plants

Items exhibited at the exhibition in Miri
ADVOCACY

SAM worked with two groups of communities residing near the town of Marudi affected by oil palm plantations. The first group of communities is located in Puyut-Lubuk Nibung. More than 20 villages may potentially be affected, of which residents from 3 villages, namely, Rumah Manjan, Rumah Nanta and Rumah Beliang, have been most active resisting the project, including by erecting blockades in two locations. They had also forged a strong relationship with SAM. The second plantation in Nanga Seridan may also affect a larger area, but one community at least, Rumah Labang, has been strongly resisting the encroachment.

On February 04, 2018, 32 community members from 8 affected villages participated in a community dialogue in Marudi town. An established residents’ association from Sungai Peking was invited to share their experience on successfully defending their customary territory a decade ago.

In July 2018, SAM organised a meeting in Marudi where more than 30 participants attended. This meeting was held to ascertain more facts and to plan further strategies with the communities. In early August, SAM visited the Lands and Surveys Department in Miri in order to obtain more cartographical information of the Marudi district in order to identify correctly the blocks that have been designated as the development areas in Marudi and to improve on the maps that we have developed for the communities.

On August 17, a meeting was convened in Rumah Beliang with around 100 participants with almost 50% women participation. In all, through these activities, we have managed to demonstrate that early community mobilisation and governance transparency are better strategies to halt the violations of community land rights, rather than the use of palm oil certification. This further shows that the path of policy and legal reforms on indigenous customary land rights, especially pertaining to consent and information access, are key in protecting indigenous customary land rights and forests under such territorial rights.

WILDLIFE

There was an increase in wildlife work at SAM in 2018. Issues dealt with included:

- the availability and public consumption of dog and cat meat where currently there is no law to prevent the same;
- cruelty to pets where SAM demanded that animal cruelty should be treated along the same lines as cruelty to humans;
- wildlife trafficking;
- exotic pet trade existing both offline and online;
- the problems with zoos including the killing of a chimpanzee and an elephant (Lasah); and
- livestock - treatment and transportation of livestock.

SAM was in touch through letters, meetings and dialogues with the relevant authorities and NGOs in finding solutions for the issues above. Most of the issues above were also highlighted in the national media to raise public awareness.
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL WORK

SAM was involved in a number of regional and international work through Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific and International. In 2018, SAM sent 2 representatives to the FoE Asia Pacific Annual General and Capacity Building meeting in Nepal. The yearly meeting had member groups from 13 countries come together to strategise and plan for the next 2 years the priority work that the region will agree to undertake. Member groups from FoE Asia Pacific agreed to focus on the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and Chinese Investments, climate related matters and the Legally Binding Instrument and the UN Binding Treaty for Business and Human Rights in the coming 2 years besides focussing on fundraising efforts to support a Secretariat for functioning region.

Since 2017, SAM has been working on issues concerning defenders of territories (DoTs). The project under the auspices of the European Union through FoEI has involved SAM in a couple of training for trainers (ToT) on DoTs. Last year, SAM’s representatives were in Bali for the second ToT organised by FoEI to share and discuss the global and regional context on DoTs and build a practical rapid response mechanism in cases of emergencies at the national or regional level. Under this project, SAM also undertook a study trip to Kalibata, South Jakarta, Indonesia to learn about the impacts of reclamation in Indonesia. As mentioned at the beginning of the report, one of the major issues that SAM worked on in 2018 was reclamation and the objectives of this study was to learn from Indonesian campaigners on strategies, advocacy, mobilising and communication tools, as well as legal strategies used against reclamation projects. Apart from that, SAM also sought solidarity from organisations like WALHI (FoE Indonesia) and KIARA, NGOs from Indonesia who were instrumental in putting together this tour. After the tour, SAM, KIARA and JARING issued a media statement on 20 September 2018, objecting to the reclamation projects in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. SAM also prepared a video documenting the struggles of the fisher communities affected by reclamation projects.

SAM is one of the steering group members under the Forest and Biodiversity programme of FoEI and in 2018, one of our staff attended a meeting in Yaounde, Cameroon on agrocommodities. The objectives on this meeting were to exchange learnings and strategies of national and regional work on agrocommodities, build a common understanding and define the objectives and strategies for FoEI work on this issue. The main idea for this meeting was to have a general outline of FoEI’s strategy on agrocommodities for the period 2019 - 2025.

Since 2018 was also the year for FoEI’s Biennial General Meeting, SAM sent a representative to Abuja, Nigeria where the meeting took place. The meeting was over a period of 9 days where 2 days were dedicated to a Just Energy Summit organised by FoE Nigeria, a day for regional meeting, a day to visit the local communities that the local host work and 5 days of business meeting discussing the activities undertaken in the last 2 years, evaluating the work of the federation as well as planning for the coming 2 years.

COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

A total of 42 press statements were issued in 2018 on issues concerning reclamation, clearing of mangrove forests, degazettement of forest reserves, NCR violations, logging activities, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement, trawlers and ‘pukat tunda’, wildlife trade, zoos and animal husbandry, sand mining, call for respect of indigenous land rights and potable water shortage among others. SAM produced about 7 videos on the Temiar blockade, trawling ban, our work with fishing communities and making food products from mangrove sources. SAM has active social media accounts with Facebook being the most popular and a website which is regularly updated with press statements and other popular articles. SAM also worked on drafting and finalising 7 publications. Apart from our communication work, SAM also received a total of 375 visitors in its Sarawak office on issues concerning oil palm expansion, logging and lack of clean water among others.
SAM ANNUAL REPORT 2018

FoE APac meeting in Nepal

EHRD meeting in Bali, Indonesia

Binding Treaty Meeting in Geneva
Study tour in Kalibata, South Jakarta, Indonesia

Agrocommodities meeting in Cameroon
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND VIDEOS PRODUCED

Publications

- Produk Makanan: Khazanah Hutan Paya Laut (BM)
- Impacts of Coastal Reclamation in Malaysia (EN, BM)
- Agroecology & Agroforestry: Community Initiatives in Sarawak (EN, BM, Iban)
- Oil palm research - case studies in Sarawak (EN)
- Malaysia case study for FoE APac publication: Rules for Business, Rights for People: Asia demands binding rules on business (EN)
- The Laws of Land Grabs in Asia Pacific (FoE APac)
- Analysis on the controversial court decision of Sandah Tabau

Production of videos on community initiatives and issues

Video on the Gua Musang Temiar community blockade  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYMc0hRrYcU

Video urging a ban on trawling  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DChKpF_IUxE&list=UULQ7RIF8OKpwVMnD_W7-SQ&index=4

Video on SAM's work with fishing communities  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qT-RlihaYelt&list=UULQ7RIF8OKpwVMnD_W7-SQ&index=5

Video on making of bubu ketam and ikan.  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3tHgoQOb3Q&list=UULQ7RIF8OKpwVMnD_W7-SQ

Video on making of food products from mangrove sources  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjvmJqneHis&list=UULQ7RIF8OKpwVMnD_W7-SQ&index=2

Video on the problems posed by trawler encroachment into Penang inshore fishing zone.  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2_H5T35Wc&index=1&list=UULQ7RIF8OKpwVMnD_W7-SQ
THE YEAR THAT WAS

On the whole, SAM had a full year with a lot of ground work and community mobilising. Community organisations have become active, organising themselves and planning activities that benefit them as a whole. They are very keen to use technology tools to communicate with one another.

SAM’s work with communities found that the community initiated activities enabled them to protect their territories, support sustainable livelihoods as well as protect the environment, biodiversity and address climate change concerns. It is crucial to promote community initiatives before we lose our traditional knowledge, biodiversity, food sovereignty and security.

In addition, due to the economic slowdown and government’s debts, the government has reviewed ongoing mega infrastructure projects. Some of these projects have been scaled down, deferred or cancelled indefinitely, for example the East Coast Rail Link. [https://www.foe-malaysia.org/sam_welcomes_cancellation_of_east_coast_rail_link_project]

We also urged the Penang State government to review several mega projects that were planned in the state which will destroy Penang’s hills and sea. [https://www.foe-malaysia.org/penang_state_government_should_review_its_mega_projects].

SAM has also begun a fair amount of communication work to amplify the issues we are working on. We have a core team that handles the web and social media sites. We have begun producing various written and digital publication for public awareness.

Following are details of our sites.

Website: www.foe-malaysia.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheEarthMalaysia/
Twitter: @SahabatAlamMsia
Instagram: @sahabat_alam_malaysia
Youtube: Sahabat Alam Malaysia
Compost workshop in Sarawak

Making fishing gears

Native tree specie in Sarawak