



KERATAN AKHBAR

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'Help free caged sun bear in house'

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MIRI: Nature lovers are up in arms after finding an endangered sun bear locked up in a house in Demak Laut, Kuching, more than three months after a woman in Kuala Lumpur made headlines for allegedly keeping a sun bear cub in her apartment and "mistaking" it for a dog.

Malaysian Nature Society national council member Musa Musbah, who is Miri MNS chairman, said he had received an SOS from a member of the public over the case.

"The sun bear is locked up in a small enclosure in the house in Demak Laut, Kuching.

"I have spoken to my MNS counterparts in Kuching and also to the forestry authorities," he said.

Musa claimed that the Forest Department Sarawak had issued a licence to the resident to keep the bear.

"But at the national and state levels, sun bears are totally protected and cannot be captured," he added. The sun bear, he said, was clearly in distress, as confirmed by his contacts who had gone to the scene to check on the animal.

"I received information that the sun bear has been locked up for more than seven years. The steel cage is like a tiny hell. The bear keeps biting the steel bars trying to free itself.

"I pray that the state authorities

will rescue this poor animal. Sarawak must stop such cruelty to animals," he said.

The Star has forwarded Musa's comments to the Sarawak Forestry Corporation, which is the enforcement arm of state wildlife laws.

Forest Department Sarawak is a state agency responsible for licensing.

Meanwhile, World Wide Fund for Nature Malaysia (WWF Malaysia) also calls for the sun bear's immediate rescue.

WWF Malaysia head of Sarawak conservation department Dr Jason Hon reiterated that wildlife must be kept in the wild, not for show in homes.

"The sun bear must be surrendered to the authorities or be rescued by the relevant authorities and sent to a rehabilitation centre.

"Sun bears must have a large space to roam as they can be active day and night. Small spaces will cause great distress to these animals," he said.

Hon also said it was high time that the rules and regulations of the Sarawak Wildlife Ordinance 1998 be updated.

"There is too much abuse in wildlife, pet trade and loss of these natural assets due to habitat destruction," he added.

On June 12, singer Zarish Sofia Yasin, 27, claimed trial in the Sessions Court to two charges of keeping a sun bear cub at her apartment in Desa Pandan.



Please release me: The caged sun bear in the residential house in Demak Laut housing estate in Kuching.