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Prominent social activist Martin Khor succumbs to cancer

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GEORGE TOWN: Penang has lost one of its most prominent sons with the passing of Martin Khor Kok Peng.

Khor had led the civil society movement not just in Malaysia but also internationally for decades as a member or leader in several organisations.

He took up the fight for consumer rights as secretary of the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP). He was also an active environmentalist which serving as advisor in Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM).

He started out as a journalist, following in the footsteps of his father, the late Datuk Khor Cheang Kee.

Khor was also a lecturer at Universiti Sains Malaysia and had written extensively on economic issues.

He was executive director of the Third World Network, which is based in Europe, when he was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago.

He then returned to Penang for treatment before he succumbed to his illness at his home in Tanjung Bungah this morning.

Among others, he also served as vice-chair of the Working Group of Experts on the Right to Development under the UN Commission on Human Rights.

He was also a member of the International Trade and Industry Ministry's national committee on multilateral trade issues.

His wife Meenakshi Raman is also prominent social activist. She is now president of SAM.




Meanwhile, tributes have poured in for Khor.

Penang Consumer Protection Society president Datuk K. Koris Atan recalled that he was a prominent campaigner against the Penang Transport Master Plan.

Among those who have paid tribute to him are director of US-based Knowledge Ecology International James Love. In a Twitter message, he described Khor as a friend and someone he admired.

Others who also expressed their grief were Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah, Finnish government official Timo Voipio, author Ann Pettifor and Indian civil rights activist Zakir Thomas.

Due to restrictions placed on movement because of the Covid-19 outbreak, only close family members are allowed at the wake and funeral.

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