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Press Statement for immediate release

5 November 2009

Police stand guard while Samling's excavators plough through Kenyah's NCR land

BELAGA – A group of police officers are guarding the workers of Samling Plantation Sdn. Bhd. while clearing works are being carried out using excavators inside the native customary land territory of the Kenyahs from Long Koyan for the purpose of establishing an oil palm plantation.

Samling started its clearing works yesterday, but were stopped and told to leave by the Kenyah villagers.

Today however, Samling ignored the villagers and continued to plough through Kenyah's native customary land under guard from the Royal Malaysian Police.

The villagers are angry with Samling for not heeding their warnings not to encroach into their territory. But they are more disappointed with the actions of the police, who they say time and time again are not professional in their conduct and are visibly seen to be in collusion with the company.

Prior to this, the village head of Long Koyan, TK Nyalang Tahe has made numerous police reports on Samling's encroachments but no action was taken by the police. He even went to stop an excavator to confiscate its keys so that he could surrender it to the police for the police to take action against the company.

However, on 21 July 2009, the police issued a warrant of arrest to TK Nyalang Tahe and he was summoned by the police to surrender himself to the Sungai Asap Police Station. Apparently, a police report was made by the company against TK Nyalang for allegedly stealing an excavator belonging to Samling.

TK Nyalang and his residents argued with the police that the excavator was not stolen and it is still under the care of the workers of Samling Plantation. The keys are in their possession as it was passed to them by the plantation workers. They said it is even stated in their police report.

The police then told TK Nyalang to sign a police bond and he has to appear at the Belaga Magistrate Court on 21 August 2009 to answer to the charge of stealing.

TK Nyalang abided by the police order appeared at Belaga Magistrate Court on the morning of 21 August 2009. But he was shocked when told by the Court's registry that the police have not even registered his case to be mentioned on that day.

TK Nyalang went back to the Sungai Asap Police Station to seek clarification from the police, but the police told him that they will inform him when he is supposed to appear in court. However, until today the police have not informed him on the status of the case.

Press statement release by:

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For more information and updates please contact Abun Sui Anyit of the Sarawak Indigenous Lawyers Alliance (SILA) at 014-3307466.