

**Najib failed 'spectacularly' in anti-graft fight, says analyst**  
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In response to the explosive video evidence of how Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud's family members and business associates abuse logging licences, an Australian scholar commented that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has "failed spectacularly" in fulfilling his anti-corruption promise.

Greg Lopez (right), visiting fellow of the Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University, made the scathing remark during his interview with Al Jazeera after the influential international news TV channel reported on the video evidence.

"Well, I think there is sufficient evidence in the public sphere that Prime Minister Najib Razak has failed spectacularly in trying to curb corruption," he replied when asked about Najib's track record in fighting graft.

To back his argument, Lopez cited the RM250 million National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal that hit the family of former women, family and community development minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

"The prime minister merely asked her to step down and did not take any action.

"That is just one example to show that corruption is entrenched in the political system and Prime Minister Najib Razak has failed to actually make any dent in corruption," he said.

The video evidence of Taib's family members' involvement in land graft was obtained by Global Witness, a London-based NGO that investigates and campaigns against environmental and human rights abuses.

In the discreetly filmed video, two of Taib's first cousins, a family member of Taib's key business partner and a lawyer who represented the cousins, were caught abusing logging licences given by Taib's government to enrich themselves, and explaining the mechanisms of circumventing existing laws to profit from the scheme.

However, Taib's lawyer has dismissed all the allegations as "entirely untrue".

The video also showed that one of his two cousins, Fatimah Abdul Rahman, defending Taib during her meeting with an investigator sent by Global Witness who posed as a foreign investor.

"I am not making any excuses or whatever, but you know, I mean if you look at the good he's (Taib) done for the state, it outweighs all the things that people have said about him.

"I know people are talking about him being corrupted and all but I think who isn't in this world, when they're leaders (laughs)," she says.

'Land under logging licences encroached into ancestral land'

Global Witness found that the land under the logging licences issued to Taib's family members encroached into the ancestral land of the indigenous people.

They were, however, never consulted by the government or companies on plans to clear their land for plantations.

"We will fight on at all cost. We let them take timber in the past. We had no idea they are planning to take our land," Vincent Balingau, a farmer in the land affected, told Al Jazeera.

Villagers at Long Napir, a settlement of Penan and Kelabit indigenous people, blamed their plight squarely on Taib.

"He lives, the rest of us suffer," Tamin Sepuluh Ribu, a former village headman, said during an interview with Al Jazeera.

"We have no land to farm, our rivers have become muddy, there's hardly any fish left any more."

Despite historical documents having proven their land rights, Fatimah and Norlia, in the video, described the local folk as "naughty people".

"They are pretty naughty people... they try to make money. So the minute they hear... they have people in the Land and Survey Department who will tell them, look this land has been given, has been titled to this company to do palm oil and what-not, they'll plant themselves there.

"Technically they cannot claim at all but they could make life difficult if you don't accommodate them," Fatimah says.

Norlia added that, "They may harass you, that's all. They are actually squatters on the land, because the land doesn't belong to them. It's government land. So they're squatting."

One of them was quoted in another part of the video as saying, "You know they're very very poor. When leaders come they look at leader like their kings and they always expect some handouts and things like that, you know."

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