

Mulu natives lodge report against CM for 'land grab'  
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A group of representatives of the Berawans, Trings and Penans yesterday lodged a police report in Miri against Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud over alleged "corrupt practices" in particular over the building of resort by Borsamulu Resort Sdn Bhd.

In their report the complainants claim that Taib in his capacity as the state minister of planning and resources management had directed the Sarawak Land and Surveys Department to alienate part of their native community's customary land now known as Lot 7, Block 14 Mulu Land District to Borsamulu Resort.

The Land and Survey Department is under the Ministry of Planning and Resource Management.

Mark Bujang, Executive director of Borneo Resources Institute Malaysia (Brimas) said in a statement today that representatives from Kampung Long Terawan, Long Win, Long Bangan, Batu Bungan, Long Iman and Sungai Melinau (Mulu), Tutoh, Baram lodged a police report at the Miri Central Police Station.

The complainants alleged that Taib, along with his children, sister, brother-in-law and niece held directorships and shareholdings of Borsamulu Resort through various private limited companies such as Kenyalang Cergas, Mesti Bersatu, Plieran and Daya Syukra Sdn Bhd, said Bujang.

"We have decided to file this report ... to stop a breach of the law or an abuse of power by those in authority and as lawful landowners of the affected native customary land who have been wrongfully deprived of our land," said Dennis Along, one of the native representative from Long Terawan who made the report.

They are calling for the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and related government agencies to "take appropriate action".

According to Bujang, the complainants are citing Taib for breach of provisions in Section 2(1) concurrently with subsection (2) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance No. 22/1970 and Section 2(8) of the eighth schedule in the federal constitution.

Their complaint adds to the growing list of allegations against the Sarawak CM, with two other reports of land grabs this week alone, on the protected native land of Pulau Bruit (above) near Sibuan, and a large piece of land adjacent to Semenggok National Park near Kuching.

State hinders Suhakam meeting

Meanwhile today, representatives of the Indigenous Peoples Network of Malaysia (JOAS) said their planned meeting with the Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) at the Petronas Games Village Hall was thwarted when they were denied, at the last minute, the use of the venue they had rented for the occasion.

joas meeting suhakam in miri 111210 01Said JOAS president Adrian Lasimbang in a separate statement today, officers from the Dewan Suarah Miri, under the Sarawak Ministry of Social Development and Urbanisation, had cancelled their prior booking citing a "directive from higher authorities".

Organising committee member Christina David said that the officers had just reconfirmed the day before that their booking was confirmed.

"We have already made a booking with the Dewan Suarah officers a month ago and everything was fine until yesterday morning, when they called and told us that we cannot use the Petronas Games Village Hall," said David.

She said the officers' excuse was that it was "a directive from the top" and when pressed, said their booking had to give way to a government booking that had higher priority.

"This is not fair and it looks as if there are some unseen hands here that are trying to sabotage our meeting with Suhakam," said Bujang, who is also on the organising committee.

JOAS alleges that the state government is trying to intimidate the group and frustrate their attempts to hold a dialogue with the national human rights body.

Lasimbang said the meeting was important especially to air their concerns over the issue of customary land rights.

Mohammad Sha'ani Abdullah is representing Suhakam in the session to discuss the National Inquiry on the land rights of indigenous peoples in Malaysia.

Lasimbang said they finally managed to secure the Miri Red Crescent Hall as a contingency venue to convene the meeting.