

**PBS In Support Of Proposed Native Land Tribunal In Sabah
Bernama
February 1, 2012**

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) has expressed full support and plans to take up the proposed setting up of the native land tribunal to the Barisan Nasional (BN) Committee on land issues chaired by Sabah Chief Minister.

PBS Secretary General Datuk Henrynus Amin said the idea of a native land tribunal was very good and the party expects its implementation by the relevant authorities.

"BN Sabah has identified land issues as one of its priorities with the Chief Minister himself now taking the lead to find solution. We will discuss and make recommendation to the state government," he said in a statement, here Wednesday.

Henrynus was commenting on the proposal of a native land tribunal by Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak, Richard Malanjum during the recent seminar held at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

He said PBS was fully aware and sympathetic to the numerous cases of unresolved land dispute between villagers and big companies where illiterate and ignorant villagers may have lost their native land to big companies through fraudulent means.

"There were cases where villagers were duped into selling their land or forced to sign unfair agreement by unscrupulous land brokers who then sold the agricultural land to land developers at higher prices," he said.

He said PBS was seriously looking into cases where illegal syndicates actively applied for native land without title and without the knowledge of unsuspecting land owners who may have fully developed their land under the native customer rights.

Henrynus said the numerous reports of victims of these syndicates who use greedy proxies and worked closely with corrupt government officials to rob NCR land from native land owners was simply mind boggling.

He said in most cases, aggrieved villagers or native land owners had no means to get legal redress as they could not afford the hefty legal fee.

"Though there were some legal assistance rendered by NGOs or in some cases politically motivated lawyers in the past, the long process and cost of traveling back and forth to Kota Kinabalu had deterred them from pursuing their cases," he said.

"As result the vast majority of aggrieved villagers or native land owners simply had no access to legal assistance."

Henrynus said the proposed native land tribunal should provide aggrieved native land owners or NCR owners with an easy and affordable venue to seek legal redress in their land dispute just like how house buyers or consumers can get legal redress for their problems.

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