

A detailed black and white line drawing of a rainforest scene. On the left, a large palm tree trunk and fronds are visible. On the right, there are large, broad-leafed plants and a bird perched on a branch. The background shows more dense foliage and trees. The title 'Rainforest Information Centre' is written in a stylized font across the top, with 'Rainforest' in a box.

Rainforest Information Centre

P.O. BOX 368 LISMORE N.S.W. 2480 AUSTRALIA

17.1.89

URGENT ACTION ALERT

IN THE LAST WEEK, SARAWAK POLICE HAVE ARRESTED 81 PENAN
AT LOGGING BLOCKADES ON THE BARAM RIVER IN NORTHERN SARAWAK.

12th January, 16 Penan arrested, detained without rights.
14th January, 8 Penan arrested, detained without rights.
15th January, 57 Penan arrested, no information.

All have been charged under the new forestry ordinance which allows anyone found obstructing logging operations to be arrested with penalties of up to two years in jail and M\$5,000 fine.

The Penan arrested on the 12th are being held under a fourteen day detention order, supposedly to assist the police in gathering evidence. During this time the Penan can have no contact with a lawyer or their families. Blockading tribals who have been held under a detention order in the past have been beaten, given minimal or no food, kept in cramped conditions (up to 15 in a cell designed for 4) and without blankets or mattresses.

Mr Leo Chai, State Director of the Forest Service commenting on the recent arrests said that the Penan are very stubborn and "are being taught a Lesson".

The recent spate of arrests started in late November last year, with police moving in to arrest tribals at blockades that had been set up in October. Kelabit and Penan in the Limbang River region were arrested. On December 10, international human rights day, another 12 Penan were arrested at blockades on the Baram River.

Now in some Penan settlements there are only women and children left; all the men have been arrested. The spirit of the blockading tribes is said to be strong but they obviously cannot stand this kind of attack on their basic rights much longer.

Our friends in Malaysia have asked that we all write immediately to Malaysian authorities expressing in the strongest possible polite terms the obligation the Malaysian Government has to honour and protect the rights of its tribal peoples to their traditional lands

Write to:

YAB Datuk Patinggai Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud
Chief Minister of Sarawak, The Chief Minister's Office, 93502
Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

His Excellency Tan Sri Zakaria Bin Mahmud Ali
High Commissioner, Malaysian High Commission
7 Perth Avenue, Yarralumla ACT 2600

Garth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Parliament House,
Canberra, 2600; demanding that Australia ban the import of timber
from Malaysia until the logging on tribal lands ceases.

We must now also match the escalation in oppression of the Penan
people. Rainforest and indigenous peoples groups around the world
are now calling for a boycott of all Malaysian products until
such time as the rights of the tribal peoples of Sarawak and
Sabah are recognised and the logging on their traditional lands
is halted.

For the Penan people, the coming months will be critical. To be
able to continue blockading, pay for travel to and from courts
and survive with many of their active people in jail, the Penan
will need a lot of financial assistance.

Please send money for the Penan either directly to the RIC, or
for tax deductibility, send it to ACF, stating your preference
that the money be used for the work of the RIC, with a covering
letter to us saying that the money is for the Penan.

We heard recently from Sarawak that protest actions for the Penan
taking place in Australia, especially the ship blockades, have
received a lot of publicity in Malaysia and have inspired many
people to keep up the struggle knowing that there are people
overseas who know and care about what is happening in their
country. Please help the Penan continue their struggle.

For the Earth



Patrick Anderson.

Forestry Rainforests

Rainforest/Information Centre

P.O. BOX 368 LISMORE N.S.W. 2480 AUSTRALIA

18 JAN 1989

17.1.89

Dear friends,

We need your help. Enclosed are two urgent action alerts on recent developments where our support can make the difference. Somewhere a stand has to be taken; let it be in Sarawak and India and let it be now.

For the Earth

Francesca d'Espiney

Francesca d'Espiney

STOP THE WORLD BANK DAMMING INDIA

Over the last century, 60 million people have been displaced by large dams in India. The social, cultural and ecological cost of this process is beyond comprehension. Most of the oustees received no compensation; millions of hectares of productive river valleys and dense forests were flooded and many of the schemes have been outright failures even in standard economic terms. Many of the dams have broken; some have filled with silt as fast as they have been built; large areas within the irrigation areas have become wasteland due to waterlogging and salination.

Even where the dams have succeeded, traditional sustainable agricultural practices have been replaced with monocultural cash crops dependent on high cash and energy inputs, destroying the livelihood of millions of traditional farm workers.

Yet the Australian Government, through the World Bank, is now providing funds for the largest river "development" scheme in India. The Narmada Valley Project is set to displace over one million people, mostly tribals, and flood hundreds of thousands of hectares of well forested river valley to provide irrigation water for cash crops and electricity for the urban elite.

As part of the Narmada Valley Project, the World Bank is providing funds for the Sardar Sarovar Dam. If constructed, this dam will displace some 70,000 people. The Bank is considering funding a second large dam in the Narmada Valley, the Narmada Sagar Dam that will displace 100,000 people. Together these dams would flood out 130,000 hectares of rich forest and productive agricultural land.

The tribal people threatened with displacement by the dams are adamant that they will drown rather than leave their traditional lands.

The World Bank claims that it is doing everything in its power to see that the Narmada oustees get a fair deal and that reforestation is carried out to replace the lands submerged by the dams. The Bank's policies on tribal people and involuntary resettlement recognize that tribal people must be compensated with lands acceptable to the tribal community and sufficient in quantity and quality to restore the previous environment enjoyed by the tribal society.

In December 1988 the Central Government of India announced that there is no land available to settle the 70,000 people who will be displaced by the Sardar Sarovar dam. There is no land available for reforestation.

If the World Bank continues to fund the Narmada project, this will make a mockery of its policies on indigenous peoples and involuntary resettlement, continuing the process of "underdevelopment" that industrial society is thrusting on the peoples and environments of India that are still ecologically and culturally benign and sustainable.

This campaign can be successful. Last June, due to local, national and international protests, the World Bank cancelled its funding for the Bodghat Dam project in India which was to have flooded tribal lands and caused enormous environmental damage.

Please write to the Australian Director to the World Bank;

Robert Carling
Alternate Director
The World Bank, 1818 H St NW
Washington DC 20433
U.S.A.

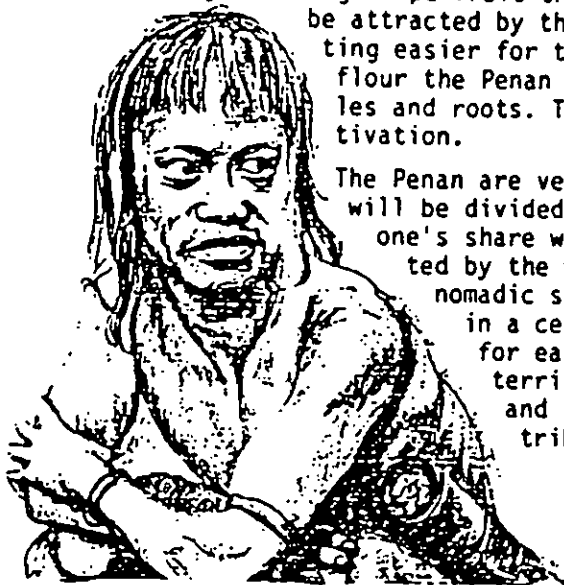
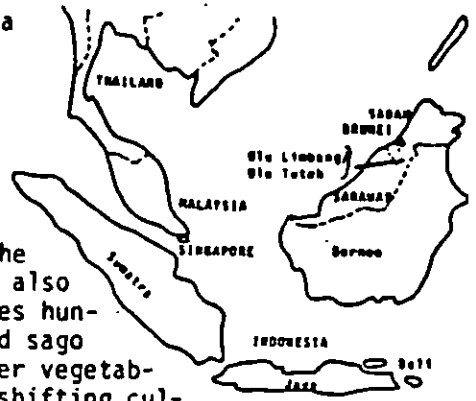
and send a copy to:
Peter Tormey
World Bank Liason
The Treasury
Barton A.C.T. 2600

Urge him, as the Australian Government representative to the World Bank, to oppose the Bank's involvement in the Sardar Sarovar Dam scheme and the whole Narmada project because of the devastating effect these developments will have on the tribal populations and the forest lands of the Narmada valley. Australia should instead be supporting and promoting small, sustainable hydro-electric and irrigation projects designed and implemented by local people, that would have minimal cultural and environmental impact.

PETITION

Save the last aborigines of Sarawak !

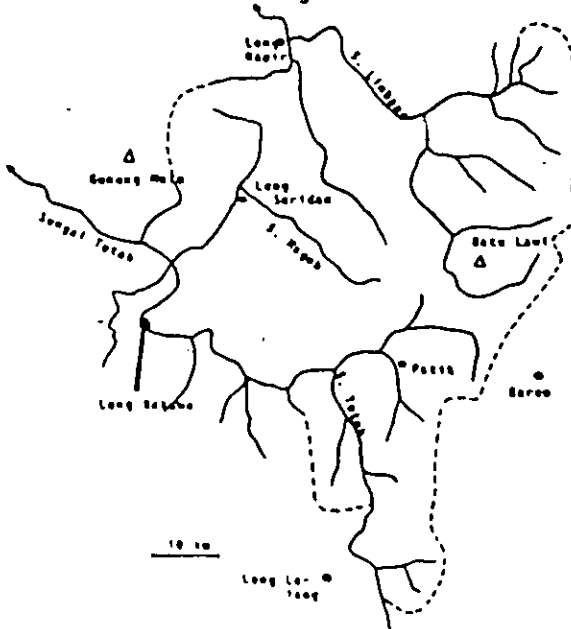
The last jungle tribe of Sarawak, the Penan, live in the area of Ulu Limbang/Ulu Tutoh. Still today the Penan hunt by blow pipe and poisonous darts or with dogs and spear. The main food of the Penan are wild boar, monkeys, birds and sago flour, which is made out of wild palm stems. Each of the 16 tribals in Ulu Limbang/Ulu Tutoh has a territory which the Penan use for their nomadic life style. Their huts are completely made out of jungle products. They settle at a single place for one week up to three months, always according to the availability of enough ripe fruit trees. The wild boars will also be attracted by the fruit trees, which makes hunting easier for the Penan. Beside meat and sago flour the Penan also eat fruits, but never vegetables and roots. The Penan don't practise shifting cultivation.



The Penan are very social. Every prey, even if it is just a little bird, will be divided between the families (up to 15) of each tribal, so that one's share will be pretty as a finger's nail. The fruits are collected by the women and children and also equally distributed. The nomadic style of life allows just a certain density of population in a certain region. A tribe may invite his neighbours to join for eating fruits, when they are ripening in abundance in his territory. After the big harvest, the neighbours will leave and go home. Fights and head hunting is unknown with Penan tribals.

MAP OF ULU LIMBANG/ULU TUTOH

Boundary of the demanded forest reserve (unless no ---- line)
to the north: Sungai Limbang-River
to the south: Sungai Tutoh-River



Since many thousand years the Penan have used their home lands, without doing any ecological damage to the rainforest. But now the Penan are treated as dirt and indirectly being exterminated by the government of Sarawak, which sells licenses to logging companies. Without asking the Penan about their opinion, their home lands will be irreversibly damaged. The Penan are forced to settle at a single place and in future they will have to earn their living as plantation workers. Missionaries visit their settlements and convert them to Christianity, although Penan already have an ethical conception of life. Moreover with the rising influence of civilisation the Penan will be more prone to diseases to which they are not immune. Last but not least their knowledge about useful jungle plants and their culture will be lost for ever.

The future for the 16 Penan tribals in Ulu Limbang/Ulu Tutoh will be the same, if the advancing bulldozers can't be stopped. The new bridge over the Sungai Tutoh-River at Long Bakawa (see map) is already open and the logging tractors will penetrate further into Penan home lands. In the area south of Sungai Tutoh the battle for the Penan is already lost.

The Penan at Ulu Limbang/Ulu Tutoh are against any logging in their home lands, but they can't defend themselves strongly enough. The Penan need your help !

SAVING THE PENAN PEOPLE

PETITION

To His Excellency Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud and His Excellency's Government.

The petition of the undersigned respectfully sheweth: -

That there is widespread international opposition to logging activities within the Ulu Limbang/Ulu Tutoh region, the traditional homeland of the Penan, who are as a result being dispossessed.

Your petitioners most humbly pray that Your Excellency and the Sarawak government should:-

- 1/ IMMEDIATELY STOP ALL LOGGING ACTIVITIES IN THE ULU LIMBANG/ULU TUTOH AREA, AND
- 2/ GUARANTEE THE PENAN THEIR RIGHT TO FOLLOW THEIR TRADITIONAL WAYS.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

NAME	ADDRESS & COUNTRY	SIGNATURE

Please return to: P.Faigl, 235 Boundary St., West End 4101 Q.

THE PENAN: LOGGING VS. LAND RIGHTS - A MATTER OF SURVIVAL OR LIVING

A Report by Petr Faigl

The Penan people, an agoriginal race of central Borneo, of North-eastern Sarawak are under the threat of massive logging activities in their tribal lands. Under Sarawakan law (the Forest Ordinance) the state government can freely dispose of any land that is currently not under cultivation or habitation. In the case of the nomadic and semi-nomadic Penan tribes who do not grow crops and build no permanent houses this law in fact makes them into a homeless people even in their own land. There^{are} an estimated several hundred of these Penan living in the jungles encompassing the catchment areas of the upper reaches of the Tutoh and the Limbang Rivers (Ulu S. Tutoh and Ulu S. Limbang, respectively) in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions. There is a further 1,000 to 2,000 Penan in the Baram region that have adopted, more or less, a settled lifestyle, habiting in Penan versions of the typical longhouse. (The Penan do not know how to build a 'proper' longhouse, nor do they have the tools and materials to do so.)

The older generation of Penan almost nostalgically remembers the times of the British government: "They gave us guns to hunt with, they gave us bush-knives, laincloth material and sorongs. Now we get nothing. Now they only tell us to settle and grow rice in the heat of the sun". Presently the Penan find themselves in the unplesent situation of having to face the dangers of encroaching logging operations. The Sarawakan government has been freely exercising its right to dispose off logging licences as it pleases. Local companies have repeatedly failed to be granted logging concessions in the Baram region. However, licences are easily obtained by Chinese companies, especially by those with a large proportion of their shares owned by governmental officials. In this way all the profit is kept 'in the family'.

Commercial timber exploitation of the Penan region is considered by the Sarawakan government an inevitable step towards development. The government claims to have plans to 'develop the Penans'. However, when one ventures to ask the subjects themselves what are their immediate and most urgent needs, the reply is simple and always embarassingly the same: "Our land. We want our land". There appears to be no appreciation in governmental circles of the fact that the nomadic Penan need the undisturbed rainforest for their survival. Currently logging roads are being constructed and timber removed without the knowledge or even consent of the majority of the Penan or their representatives. Virtually no compensations are paid - if any money find their way to the Penan it is usually in the form of token hand-outs to individuals influential within their community to silence any too loud complaints.

It is not difficult to imagine the Penan case could be easily regarded as an instance of human rights violations. By their activities the logging companies commit an offence against the Penan, hindering them in obtaining their livelihood

in the traditional manner, through hunting and gathering. Sago palms, the source of sago flower which is used for the preparation of 'na-o', the staple food of nomadic Penan, become nonexistent or extremely rare in logged areas. The Penan have to travel far to find mature enough trees in quantity sufficient for their needs. Wild animals flee disturbed jungle and many fish do not breed or cannot survive in rivers polluted with mud and silt. The Penan therefore find it often extremely difficult to supplement their starchy diet - be it na-o or rice - with some protein. Other jungle products used in the manufacture of baskets, blowpipes and darts become likewise scarce. This effects their cash income which comes largely from the sale of basketry to neighbouring tribes.

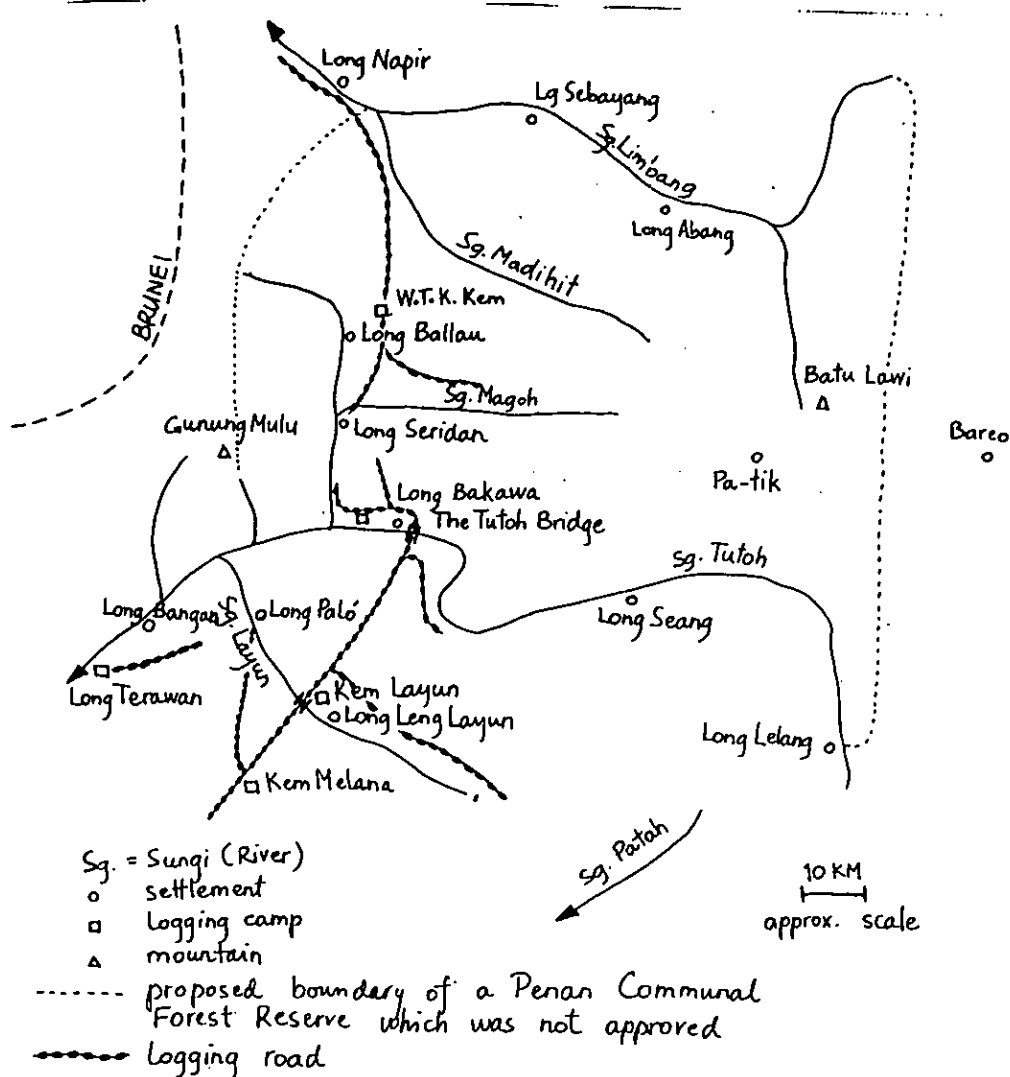
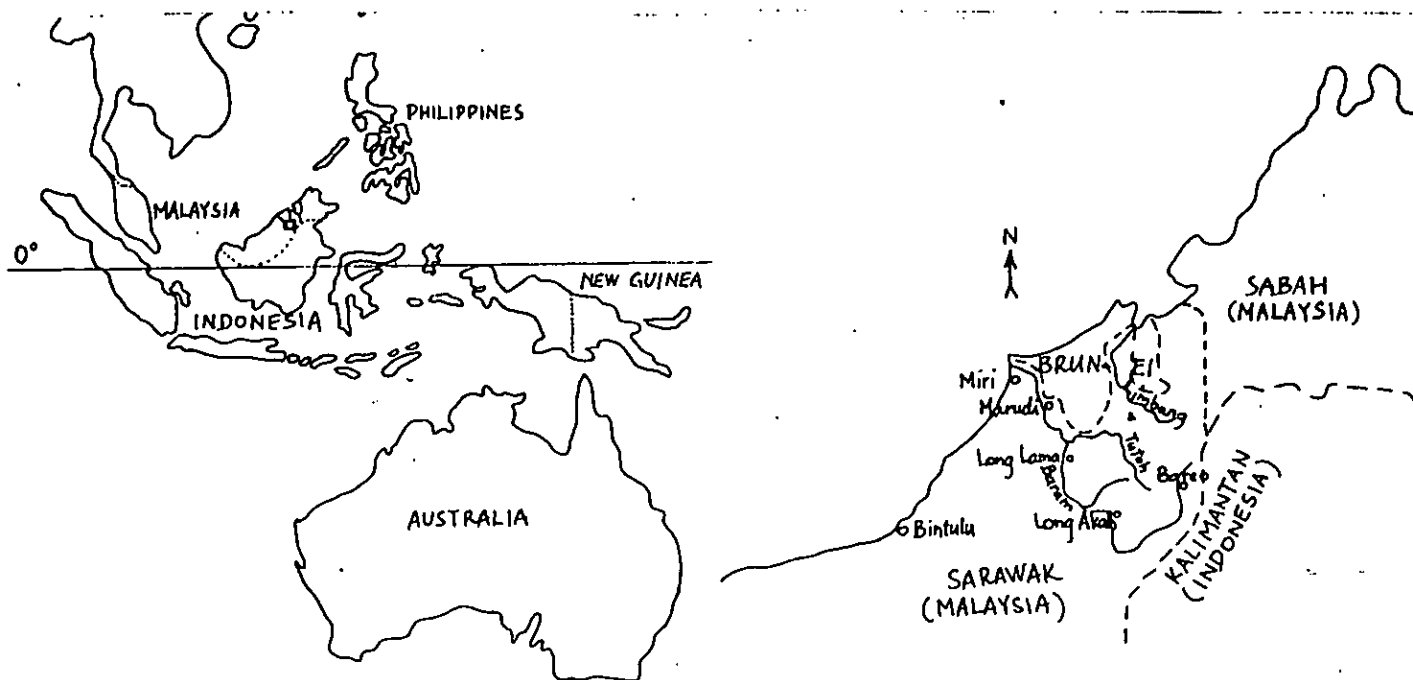
The Penan of the Ulu S.Limbang and Ulu S.Tutuh have been trying, over the past several years, to secure themselves the right to at least a portion of their ancestral tribal living grounds. They have approached governmental officials at meetings organized by the government and asked to be granted 'reserves'. Their requests were either ignored or ridiculed. Later, replies to written applications for Communal Forest Reserves (Hutan Komunal/Hutan Simpatan) either never arrived or were negative. Since 1984 Bruno Manser, the Swiss researcher working among the nomadic tribes, has been assisting the Penan in voicing and presenting their requests to the government and the logging companies. However, after becoming their 'secretary' he found himself in an unexpectedly dangerous situation. Certain local police expressed their desire to 'shoot him at sight'. The government however issued strict orders not to use any violence against him. Nevertheless there have been death-threats delivered to him. An anonymous letter addressed to Mr. Manser and delivered to his Penan friends said: "Be kind to your friend Bruno. Soon you will not see him any more, except dressed in the white."

Slowly the tribals are coming to realise that only when united and their plight publicized can they have a chance of getting their voices heard and listened to. Out of hard-learned experience came the realization that letters alone achieve nothing, unless enforced by a protest demonstration. After holding a number of meetings the Penan people and their representatives decided to carry out a total blockade of all logging activities in their traditional tribal lands to draw public attention to their plight. They also formed a committee for the protection of their land rights, and contacted a number of international organizations requesting them to make an enquiry into this matter. Considering the fact that very few Penan receive any substantial education - only few have some knowledge of the English language and not all are familiar with the official Malay language - this is a remarkable achievement. It is the result of self-education by some and the moral support they draw from the publicity overseas.

In January this year the representatives of thirteen Penan tribes of the Ulu S.Limbang and Ulu S.Tutoh region signed a declaration demanding immediate stop to all logging activities in their tribal lands. They warned they would blockade all logging if their request was not met. Logging however continued, the timber companies becoming only more cautious and diplomatic in dealing with the Penan. On one occasion they, for instance, gave the Penan materials - oddly-cut timber of no commercial value to the company and some recycled corrugated roofing iron - to build a new rice-storage house. In a subsequent move the Penan committee decided on staging a total blockade at the end of March this year. Their demands to the timber companies and the state government are:

- 1/ Unconditional and immediate stop to all logging operations in their tribal lands of the Ulu S.Limbang, Ulu S.Tutoh, and Ulu S.Patah
 - 2/ Appropriate compensation for damages affected to their living environment and the quality of their life by logging activities - they requested for a board of experts to estimate these damages
 - 3/ Legal recognition of their right to the land they have always inhabited - this means the formation and gazetting of a Communal Forest Reserve in the area encompassing the Ulu S.Limbang and Ulu S.Tutoh, and Ulu S.Patah.
- The Penan warned of repeated demonstrations if the government and the timber companies make no effort in trying to accommodate their demands.

The Penan do not want to 'remain in the stone age', as has been suggested by a governmental official. But they wish to 'develop' from a secure basis, when their land and lives are not threatened by an outside agent beyond their control. They need the feeling of security that comes from being in charge of one's destiny, just as any other people do. The Penan don't want to be forced to 'civilization'. Rather, they want to take it at such a speed and dosage that can be accommodated by their society with ease and no stress. The resilience of the Penan society, as of any tribal society, is low, and development should come in a more reassuring way, not in the threatening form of indiscriminate logging of the last remaining tropical virgin rainforests of Sarawak, the traditional homeland of these people.



ULU SUNGAI TUTOH/ULU SUNGAI LIMBANG REGION - HOMELAND OF THE LAST NOMADIC PENAN TRIBES

DECLARATION OF THE PENAN PEOPLE

We, the Penan people of the Tutoh and Limbang Rivers region, declare: Stop destroying the forest or we will be forced to protect it.

The forest is our livelihood. We have lived here before any of you outsiders came. We fished in clean rivers and hunted in the jungle. We made our sago meal and eat fruit of trees. Our life was not easy but we lived it in content. Now the logging companies turn rivers into muddy streams and the jungle into devastation. The fish cannot survive in dirty rivers and wild animals will not live in devastated forest.

You took advantage of our trusting nature and cheated us into unfair deals. By your doings you take away our livelihood and threaten our very lives. You make our people discontent. We want our ancestral land, the land we live off, back. We can use it in a wiser way. When you come to us, come as guests, with respect.

We, the representatives of the Penan people, urge you: Stop the destruction now. Stop all logging activities in the Tutoh and Limbang Rivers region. Give back to us what is properly ours. Save our lives, have respect for our culture. If you decide not to heed our request, we will protect our livelihood. We are a peace-loving people, but when our very lives are in danger, we will fight back. This is our message.

This is the message of the Penan of Long Adang, Baa Ballau, Long Bangan, Long Leng-Layun, Long Lilim, Baa Magoh, Long Kevok, Long Napir, Baa Puwak, Long Seebayang, Baa Tepon.

This Declaration was signed in January 1987.

TIMBER COMPANIES OPERATING IN THE PENAN REGION OF ULU LIMBANG, ULU TUTOH, AND ULU PATAH OF NORTH-EASTERN SARAWAK, EAST MALAYSIA

Ulu Sungai Limbang: Limbang Trading (Limbang) Sdn.Bhd.
23 Main Bazar
Limbang, Sarawak
Ph. 085-21354
W(ong) T(uong) K(wang) & Company Sdn.Bhd.
51 Jalan Maju
Sibu, Sarawak
Ph. 084-26155
Ulu Sungai Tutoh: Merlin Timber Syarikat Sdn.Bhd.
Piasau Park
Miri, Sarawak
Ph. 085-35479
Samling Timber Syarikat Sdn.Bhd.
Bang Park Arc
Miri, Sarawak
Ph. 085-33966
Sarsin Development Sdn.Bhd.
305 Taman Jade Manis
Miri, Sarawak
Ph. 085-33304
Baya Lumber Sdn.Bhd.
Main Bazar
Marudi, Baram, Sarawak
Ph. 085-55032
Ulu Sungai Patah: Keruntum Sdn.Bhd.
Taman Jade Manis
Miri, Sarawak
Ph. 085-414 719

(Petr Faigl)

HOW CAN THE PENAN BE ASSISTED IN THEIR STRUGGLE

The Penan struggle for land rights may be successful if enough pressure is exerted on the Sarawakan government to reconsider its current policies on resource utilization, environmental protection, and the rights of native people.

Signatures are being collected for a petition to be presented to the Chief Minister of Sarawak. The petition can be either signed at the Brisbane C.A.A. office or at the Justice Centre, 235 Boundary Street, West End (ph. 07-844 6146). Copies of the petition are available upon request from the Justice Centre, c/- Petr.

Letters can be written to Malaysian government officials, demanding justice for the Penan:

YAB Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohammed
Prime Minister of Malaysia
Prime Minister's Department
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

YAB Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud
Chief Minister of Sarawak & Minister of Resource Planning
Chief Minister's Office
Petra Jaya
Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia

YB Dr Lim Kheng Yaik
Minister of Primary Industries
Ministry of Primary Industries
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

YB Encik Ghafar Baba
Minister of National and Rural Development
Ministry of National and Rural Development
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

YB Datuk Amar Stephen Yong
Minister of Science, Technology and Environment
Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment's Office
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

YB Datuk Haji Noor Tahir
Minister of Tourism and Environment of Sarawak
Ministry of Tourism and environment of Sarawak
Petra Jaya
Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia

YB Datuk Amar Bujang Md Noor
State Secretary
State Secretary's Office
Petra Jaya
Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia

Please address further enquiries to the Justice Centre, c/- Petr.

DONATIONS TO SUPPORT THE PENAN CAUSE ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.