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## Sarawak natives file historical land rights case

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For the first time in the history of Malaysia, natives from three different tribes have filed a joint land rights litigation. This morning, representatives from the Kelabit, Penan and Lun Bawang communities of Upper Limbang, Sarawak, on the island of Borneo have filed a joint land rights litigation at the Miri High Court in which they are claiming native customary rights over 1770 km<sup>2</sup> of tropical forests in the Limbang river basin. The case is being represented by native rights lawyer Baru Bian who also heads the Sarawak branch of the oppositional Justice Party (PKR).

The joint claim over an area twice the size of Singapore is directed against the Sarawak state government and four Malaysian logging and plantation companies that had been given concessions over the native lands without the communities' consent. The companies listed as defendants are Ravenscourt Sdn Bhd, Billion Venture Sdn Bhd, Limba Jaya Timber Sdn Bhd and Kubang Sri Jaya Sdn Bhd. Ravenscourt is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Samling group which has recently been blacklisted by the Norwegian government for its involvement in illegal activities and environmentally destructive logging.

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**Keywords:** Asia, Forest, Malaysia, rights, Sabah, tenure

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