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Bruno Manser Fund calls on Malaysian authorities to close down Taib's land-grab firms

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Companies Commission Malaysia urged to immediately deregister Billion Venture Sdn Bhd and Ample Agro Sdn Bhd - forest lands should be given back to indigenous communities

BASEL, Switzerland, March 24, 2013 -/WORLD-WIRE/- The Bruno Manser Fund is calling on the Companies Commission of Malaysia to deregister two Sarawak companies for their alleged involvement in criminal activities.

The two companies, Billion Venture Sdn Bhd and Ample Agro Sdn Bhd, were exposed last week by Global Witness in a secretly recorded film.

In the film, two Taib cousins and two lawyers blatantly admitted that the two companies are being used to illegally enrich the family and a crony of Sarawak Chief Minister Taib Mahmud by selling off state-owned land to foreign investors.

Research by the Bruno Manser Fund has shown that Billion Venture Sdn Bhd and Ample Agro Sdn Bhd are still active and controlled by the same people as shown in the Global Witness film.

These companies should be deregistered immediately to prevent their assets from being sold off to third parties by illegal means.

Billion Venture Sdn Bhd is a defendant in Sarawak's biggest land rights litigation which was jointly filed by Kelabit, Penan and Lun Bawang plaintiffs in March 2011.

The natives' land claim has been struck out by the High Court of Sarawak on formal grounds but is currently on appeal.

The Court of Appeal's hearing is scheduled for this coming Wednesday, 27th March, in Kuching. The case is being handled by the Kuching law firm Messrs Baru Bian of renowned Sarawak land rights lawyer and opposition politician Baru Bian.



Penan village of Long Tegan, Upper Limbang, Sarawak, Malaysia (Photo copyright Bruno Manser Fund)

Billion Venture Sdn Bhd holds a plantation licence (LPF/0027) for 32,584 hectares of secondary forest in Sarawak's Upper Limbang region as well as two Belian timber licences (BT 9098 and BT9144) for this same area.

Belian is an endangered tree species whose export is prohibited. Billion Venture Sdn Bhd has been offered for sale to a Global Witness investigator who posed as a foreign investor.

Please contact us for more information:

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Upper Limbang plaintiffs - Kelabit, Penan and Lun Bawang - with lawyer Baru Bian (Photo Copyright Bruno Manser Fund)

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