

# Orang Asli hand over 'logging company' money to MACC

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**IPOH:** Representatives of 10 Orang Asli families from Jalong in Sungai Siput have handed over RM15,000 to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), claiming that the money was provided by a logging company.

The representatives from Kampung Lawai also lodged a report with the commission.

Mat Seri Pandak, a spokesman for the group, said last Thursday, two representatives from the village

called a meeting with the villagers at the community's Dewan Adat.

He said the two men told the villagers that they, together with the Tok Batin (village head), had met with a state Forestry Department officer and the owner of the logging company, who gave them RM40,000 to be distributed among the villagers.

"The two claimed the meeting was held at the Sungai Siput District Forestry Office and that in total, RM80,000 would be given to the villagers if the logging project was not halted by the state government.

"Many did not want to take the money, but did so because they did not want any problems within the community," Mat Seri told reporters outside the MACC building here yesterday.

The group lodged a report on the matter at the Simpang Jalong police station on Monday.

They also brought the matter to the attention of Kumpulan Aktivist Sahabat Alam (Kuasa), which had earlier been helping the villagers to ensure that logging activity was halted as it was affecting their livelihood.

Also present at the site was Kuasa field officer Shazni Rashid.

Mat Seri said each family member was given RM50 to RM470.

"However, we are uncomfortable with the money presented to us, so the 10 of us want to hand over the money to MACC.

"The forest is our livelihood ... we don't want it destroyed. We hope MACC will investigate our report," he added.

Shazni said the logging company, which has been in operation since July, had caused pollution in Sungai Korbu, the main water source for

the district.

He said with the help of Kuasa, some of the villagers had sent a memorandum for the attention of the Perak Menteri Besar on July 25.

"Before heading to MACC, we also sent in another letter to the Menteri Besar's office, seeking his intervention," he added.

When contacted, state Forestry Department director Datuk Mohamed Zin Yusop said he was not aware of money being handed to the villagers.

"The department will investigate the claim," he added.