

Orang Asli ask Forestry Dept to stop logging activities

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IPOH: A group of Orang Asli from Jalong Tinggi in Sungai Siput is urging the state Forestry Department to stop logging activities in their customary land.

The group's spokesman Mat Seri Pandak said that for the past six months, the logging activities had caused pollution to Sungai Korbu, which is the main water source, and affected their livelihood.

He said some 2,000 people from the 10 villages were also living in fear of possible landslide or mudslide, especially during the rainy season.

"We urge the authorities to stop all logging activities immediately. Many of us are unable to go into the forest to look for our daily products such as petai and rotan.

"We have been relying on a non-governmental organisation to provide us food," he said after meeting a representative from the department yesterday, accompanied by Parti Sosialis Malaysia chairman Dr Michael Jeyakumar Devaraj.

Dr Jeyakumar said the department's representative told them that everything was done according to procedure.

"But the villagers are suffering and a majority of them don't agree with the project," he said.

Mat Seri said all villagers should be consulted first before any project was carried out on their customary land.

When contacted, the department's director, Datuk Mohamed Zin Yusop, said they would investigate the claims made by the villagers.

"Follow-up action will be taken based on our investigation," he said.