KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIMES			
TARIKH	:	13/1/2022 (KHAMIS)	MUKA SURAT	:	2
JABATAN	:	KeTSA			

RESOLVING HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

ORANG ASLI ASK PM TO TACKLE TIGER ISSUES

Group sends Ismail Sabri note, asking for wildlife habitat protection and probe into mauling

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ANEK Along, 59, was killed in a tiger attack at Kampung Sau, Pos Bihai last week. It was the second tiger attack in a year in the administrative settlement of Pos Bihai, in Gua Musang, Kelantan.

Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Kelantan chairman Mustafa Along believed the state government's decision to allow several logging concessions and land-clearing projects for agriculture, infrastructure and others had led to deforestation and loss of habitat for local tigers.

"We believe it happened due to the approval of thousands of acres of forested areas for the purpose of logging, plantation, mining and mega dams. The deterioration of this forested area has caused a crisis between wildlife and the Orang Asli community who live in the interior of Ulu Kelantan (Gua Musang in particular)."

"The degazettement of the Perias Forest Reserve as a permanent forest reserve (PFR) also contributed to this issue, according to the National Tiger Inventory, as a PFR and tiger habitat in the state," he said in a memorandum handed to the prime minister in Putrajaya earlier this week.

He said at the time the memorandum was written, the Kelantan Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) had yet to capture three tigers roaming Kampung Remau, Kampung Bujuk, Kampung Bayor, Kampung Ten'rej, Kampung Salak, Kampung Badak, Kampung Sau and Kampung Pahong in Pos Bihai.

Mustafa said the buck would not stop there as the proposed mega hydroelectric dam in the upper reaches of Sungai Nenggiri would drown several villages, causing the forested areas to become smaller.



A female tiger and her cubs pictured by a Wildlife and National Parks Department camera trap in Dungun, Terengganu, in July last year. FILE PIC

As a result, the conflicts between wildlife and Orang Asli in the hinterlands of Gua Musang would worsen, he said.

He wants the federal and Kelantan governments to ensure that no more land would be logged or cleared for plantation and mining.

"Among the initiatives that can be considered is to provide petroleum royalty payments to Kelantan to ensure that their dependence on forest-based economic resources, such as logging, plantation and mining, can be reduced."

He also asked that the mega hydroelectric dam in Sungai Nenggiri be cancelled, as the riverine area was rich in flora and fauna and historical value for early Orang Asli settlers.

"The forest along Sungai Nenggiri is also a habitat for wildlife, including bears, tigers and elephants. The remaining forest is very small, and it is worrying that if the plan to build the hydroelectric dam goes ahead, the forest will become smaller.

"If this happens the crisis between wildlife and the Orang Asli will become more acute."

Mustafa urged the government to investigate the death of Aneh as the three tigers had been spotted in Kampung Remau as far back as Dec 12.

He said the district Wildlife and National Parks Department office was aware of the situation but was slow to take action, and rangers used only firecrackers to scare the tigers away.

"This had caused the tigers to disperse and roam in the surrounding communities of Kampung Bujuk, Kampung Bayor, Kampung Ten'rej, Kampung Salak, Kampung Badak, Kampung Sau and Kampung Pahong.

"Such actions by the authorities give the impression that the presence of these three tigers is regarded as not a big threat."

Mustafa said residents could not take matters into their own hands for fear of being prosecuted. A community leader was convicted for shooting elephants at Pos Pasik to ensure the safety of children walking to school.

"This delay (in taking action) is unacceptable.

"When something involves the safety of the Orang Asli, why can't the relevant parties take immediate action?

"Is the safety and lives of Orang Asli not more important than preserving wildlife?"

He said between 2017 and last year, four wildlife attacks were reported in the area, involving two sunbears and two tigers, which left villagers dead or severely injured.

The Orang Asli communities in Gua Musang had also endured rampages by elephants.

"They often destroy crops that are the main source of food for Orang Asli living in the interior of Gua Musang.

"They have lost thousands of ringgit in damages."

Among the areas that have been attacked by wild elephants are Kampung Kuala Wok, Kampung Kaloi, Pos Pasik, Pos Gob, Pos Simpor, Pos Hau and Pos Henndrop.

Page 1 pic: A Malayan tiger named Pia taking a dip to cool off in her pen in Zoo Negara last year.