KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

# KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SURAT KHABAR | : | NEW STRAITS TIMES | | | |
| TARIKH | : | 14/1/2022 (JUMAAT) | MUKA SURAT | : | |
| JABATAN | : | PERHILITAN | | | |

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2022 . NewStraitsTimes

NEWS / Nation

WILDLIFE DANGER

# VILLAGERS THINK TIGERS ARE STALKING THEM

## 17 families continue to live in fear after moving from one village to another

SHARIFAH MAHSINAH ABDULLAH
**GUA MUSANG**
news@nst.com.my

ORANG Asli families who were evacuated from their homes in three villages near Pos Bihai here are still living in fear of tigers, which they believe are stalking them.

It was reported that 17 families from the three villages had been evacuated following sightings of the tigers last month.

The Orang Asli from Kampung Bujuk, Kampung Suma and Kampung Remau were moved separately from last month till last week.

Pos Bihai Orang Asli Village Security Development Committee secretary Pelinejon Assut, 38, said many families were still scared to go about their daily lives as they believed the tigers were following their scent.

"They thought that they managed to escape the tigers, but it seems the animals have followed them to Kampung Bujuk as a villager saw a tiger there last week," he said.

It is believed that three tigers belong to the same streak.

He said initially, seven Orang Asli families from Kampung Remau had to evacuate to Kampung Tendrik following tiger sightings on Dec 10.

"The sighting of the tigers forced the seven Orang Asli families to move to Kampung Tendrik but from there, they again moved to Kampung Suma when they saw tiger footprints near the village.

"At Kampung Suma, they believe the three tigers are roaming nearby after hearing the animals in a nearby bush. Together with three more families from Kampung Suma, they again moved to Kampung Bujuk.

"Later, along with seven families from Kampung Bujuk, the 10 Orang Asli families rushed back to Kampung Tendrik," he told the *New Straits Times*.

He said the tigers seemed to be able to track their movement besides evading the authorities.

"It is the first time that this has ever happened. We never experienced such an incident before this. A majority of us, especially the children, are worried after seeing the footprints and also hearing roars behind our homes.

"Looks like the tigers want to stay close to the villagers."

He hoped the authorities would solve the problem soon so the Orang Asli villagers could resume their daily activities.

Orang Asli villagers at Pos Bihai were advised against leaving their homes until the three tigers were captured by the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan).

A Department of Orang Asli Development spokesman said the advice was issued following discussions with Perhilitan.

As such, the Orang Asli community in the areas have been advised not to leave their homes, even if it was to look for food.

A school in the settlement was also closed following the sightings of the animals.

"Perhilitan has installed traps at several locations, but it was not as effective (to capture the tigers).

"Therefore, we have advised the villagers against leaving their homes as we fear they may stumble upon the tigers," said the spokesman.

At the same time, he said the department would distribute food baskets and rations to the villagers, which could last up to two weeks.

It was reported that Kelantan Perhilitan had confirmed there were three tigers roaming in the area.

General Operations Force (GOF) North Brigade deputy commander Assistant Commissioner Mohd Noh Khamis said the famed Senoi Praaq team would be deployed to Orang Asli settlements here to help track down the tigers.

Speaking to NST, he said the special tracker team from the 3rd Battalion would be deployed next week. However, he said the exact number of GOF members involved in the operation has yet to be finalised.

"The team will work closely with rangers from the state Wildlife and National Parks Department in searching for the tigers," he said.

The Senoi Praaq is a unit made up almost entirely of Orang Asli members. Its history goes back to the days of the Malayan Emergency, when it first developed its reputation as an elite jungle fighting force.

It is learnt that the deployment of the Senoi Praaq GOF to Gua Musang was made following a request by the Gua Musang district office a few days ago.



*An Orang Asli villager showing a tiger's footprints (inset) at Pos Bihai recently.* PIC BY PELINEJON ASSUT