



SAMLING'S RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTRE

This response was made to a request from the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre with regards to allegations that were made in the article, "Threat of legal action against Indigenous Borneans protesting timber company", 1 June 2021, *Mongabay*: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/06/threat-of-legal-action-against-indigenous-borneans-protesting-timber-company/>

Below is Samling's full response:

We would like to thank you for seeking our response to the allegations made in the article. Please find below our response, which we trust will be published in your Weekly Update to be released on Wednesday 7 July 2021.

1. Samling has not, whether in the letter of May 26 referred to in the article or at any time, threatened to take legal action against any of the indigenous communities located within its FMUs. Samling values open and constructive engagement with the communities.
2. Samling wishes to clarify that the allegations which essentially relate to the forest management certification were made by the online portal Save Rivers and its team and hence, Samling has had to reserve its rights against Save Rivers and its team for making unfounded allegations repeatedly, notwithstanding Samling's clarification and correction.
3. Samling has since instituted a legal suit against Save Rivers and its team for such allegations.
4. Samling maintains that it has fully complied with the requirements of the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) in obtaining the necessary internationally-recognised certification for its FMUs.
5. (Reference to the paragraph in red below) The article insinuates that MTCC and all other agencies and regulatory authorities involved in the process of certification in the state of Sarawak are corrupt rendering the certification process questionable. Samling considers this to be a very serious allegation against the agencies and authorities involved, and only serves to detract from the sustainability journey that the state of Sarawak has embarked on.

"The concessions are certified as sustainable timber producers by Malaysia's Timber Certification Council, but critics of the program say that Malaysian Borneo's decentralized governance and history of corruption make sustainable certification programs illusory."

We hope our response will suffice and if you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.