

PHOTOS FROM THE ACTION BELOW MAY BE VIEWED [HERE](#)

BORNEO RAINFORESTS ACTION **WORLD FORESTS DAY** MONDAY 21st MARCH 2011

12.30 to 1 pm, 767 George St Sydney.

This is part of a series of worldwide actions protesting the corruption of Sarawak Chief Minister Taib Mahmud who became a billionaire through logging and corruption. During Taib's 30 years in office as Chief Minister of the Malaysian state Sarawak, he has orchestrated the destruction of the primeval Borneo rainforests which have been reduced to five percent of their original size. He has become fabulously wealthy through the corrupt proceeds of this while the inhabitants of the rain forest - Penan, Iban, Bidayuh and the other 23 indigenous groups in Sarawak have seen none of it. In spite of a flourishing timber industry and rich oil and gas deposits, they remain mired in poverty, illiteracy and destitution. This month Borneo indigenous people are taking action www.bmf.ch/en/news/?show=244 and our action is in solidarity with them.

Actions have already taken place in Seattle, Ottawa, London and San Francisco www.bmf.ch/en/news/?show=243 and are planned wherever Taib's ill-gotten gains are hidden including Adelaide and Hobart later this week. The Switzerland based Bruno Manser Fund has released a black list of Taib's secret foreign assets www.bmf.ch/en/news/?show=232 in 8 countries including Australia. The black list's intention is to help the listed countries' anti-corruption and anti-money-laundering authorities identify and freeze illicit Taib assets in their countries. The list will be regularly updated and this weeks UK Sunday Times has a large story on the issue.

www.rainforestinfo.org.au/jpgs/Sunday%20Times%20Taib%20Article.pdf

As well as head of the government, Taib also had himself appointed Minister of Finance and Minister of Planning and Resource Management and controls more than 50 percent of the state budget – with the other ten ministers sharing the rest. For more sordid details on this man and the logging mafia that he oversees, see http://stop-timber-corruption.org/resources/tong_tana_march_2011.pdf

Taib and his family members have illegally acquired assets worth billions of dollars in Malaysia, Canada, the UK, Australia, the United States and other countries. All these assets should be restituted to the people of Sarawak, and the Taib family should be prosecuted for corruption, the abuse of public funds, fraud, money-laundering, tax evasion and other related crimes. We call upon the Australian government to investigate these matters and to freeze Taib's illegally acquired Australian assets

We at the Rainforest Information Centre have been involved in Sarawak logging issues since the late '80's. In 1991, two of our volunteers spent 60 days in a Sarawak jail for locking onto a crane loading rainforest logs on the Baram River and others of us helped make the film "Blowpipes and Bulldozers". We also organized Rainforest Action Groups around the country back then to try and stop the import of rainforest timbers from Sarawak see www.vimeo.com/18207753 .

The Rainforest Information Centre convened the Australia Palm Oil Campaign Group in 2006 and we have been working with various other groups creating a consumer campaign since then - www.rainforestinfo.org.au/oilpalm.html . The last 6 months we've been working with Tasmanian activists focusing on TA Ann, a company owned by one of Taib's cronies, his cousin Abdul Hamed Bin Hajji Sepawi (http://stop-timber-corruption.org/resources/bmf_report_sarawak_timber_tycoons.pdf p49). See the article www.rainforestinfo.org.au/tasmania/tas.pdf on Ta Ann and their captive bureaucracy Forestry Tasmania. As the Tasmanian Mercury reported 8/11/08: "Ta Ann was lured to Tasmania by the cheap timber price offered by Forestry Tasmania. Ta Ann chairman Datuk Hamed Sepawi told Tasmanian media in 2006 that hardwood from this state was cheaper than wood from Malaysian and Indonesian forests.... Ta Ann's deal with the State Government locked in the price it would pay for the timber at the 2006 level for the next 15 years.

This protest rally will be addressed by retiring Greens MP Ian Cohen and will mark his transition from parliament to return to his first love – action in defense of the world's forests.

Those of us who care to do so will then be proceeding from here to another forest action, <http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/deccw.pdf> this one for NSW's own native forests kicking off at 1.30 outside the DECCW's offices at 59 Goulburn St.