



THE *PAPUA NEW GUINEA* ECO-FORESTRY FORUM

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Media Release

Supreme Court rules RH logging rights illegal

The Supreme Court has quashed a decision granting logging rights over the huge Kamula Doso forest area in Western Province to Rimbunan Hijau (RH) in a court case brought by the PNG Eco-Forestry Forum, and ordered the company to pay costs to the Forum.

“This is a major victory for good governance,” said Kenn Mondiai, Chairperson of the Forum.

“This decision demonstrates to the whole world what has been going on for far too long, and legally reaffirms the Forum’s claim of widespread illegal logging in PNG facilitated by the government and the logging industry. This is only a tip of an iceberg and there is more to be uncovered of unlawful acquisition of resources and unequal benefit distribution.

The PNG Eco-Forestry Forum has been fighting through the Courts for over two years to overturn Rimbunan Hijau’s rights to log in Kamula Doso which was granted by the National Court in 2007. When the Forum decided to challenge the decision, the government amended the Forestry Act to remove the Forum from the National Forest Board”.

The matter was listed for trial in the Supreme Court this week, but minutes before the hearing began, Rimbunan Hijau conceded that their logging rights were illegal.

A 3-men Supreme Court bench recorded its displeasure at the conduct of Rimbunan Hijau in fighting the case for two years when it knew its logging rights were illegal by ordering the company to pay indemnity costs to the PNG Eco-Forestry Forum.

“This is a great victory for civil society and non government organisations in general,” added Thomas Paka, Executive Director of the Forum. “Our judges have shown that the ordinary people of PNG can stand up to corruption and win”.

The Forum especially thanked its lawyers and all the staff and members of the Forum for their tireless efforts in pursuing the case step by step to this successful outcome.

For more Information, contact the Forum on phone 323 9050 or email: teff@global.net.pg

PNG Eco-Forestry Forum

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The *Papua New Guinea* Eco-Forestry Forum supports integrated rural community development and sustainable resource use through a viable and sustainable eco-forestry industry