

'Stop land clearing'

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Orang asli want an end to third party intrusion into their land

PETALING JAYA: The orang asli of Kampung Lubuk Perah in Bera, Pahang, are pleading with the authorities against allowing a third party to allegedly rob them of their customary native land.

Village chief Tok Batin Hajemi Din said the 300 orang asli there were anxious over land clearing activities in the area, including on river bank reserves.

"The clearing work is destroying the environment and our livelihoods. We have been cultivating here for generations. Now the land is being cleared for the benefit of outsiders," said Hajemi.

He said the encroachment started in 2013.

"Each time we complain, the clearing work would stop temporarily, for months at times. After that, it starts again.

"When we last met the Pahang menteri besar in November last year, the work stopped but started again on Feb 23," he said.

Hajemi said the menteri besar's office had even written to Bera district officer Datuk Shamsuddin Sah Mohd Said to ask him to look into the matter.



Ravaged: Tok Batin Hajemi showing river banks affected by land clearing works in Bera, Pahang.

The menteri besar's senior confidential secretary Datuk Hamdan Hussin had sent the letter to the Bera District and Land Office on Dec 19, 2014, asking it to take into consideration the local community's objection to encroachment and logging activities.

Lawyer Datuk M. Ramachelvam said the orang asli community had

rights to their customary native land.

"But apparently the land has been given to a bus company, which leased the land to another company that is believed to be clearing it for an oil palm plantation," he said.

"And all this is happening in the constituency of Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob."