



Press Release

Samboja Lestari Beset by Illegal Logging and Fire

Not only fires, the orangutan and habitat conservation effort is also battling another menace: illegal logging. The Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation requests support from all stakeholders to help defeat this growing threat.

Friday, 27 September 2019. An act of illegal logging has once again occurred at the BOS Foundation's Orangutan and Land Rehabilitation Centre in Samboja Lestari. On Wednesday, 25 September 2019, our patrol team found a plot of land in Samboja Lestari that had been cleared, with logs neatly piled up, ready to be transported. We estimate that the size of the cleared land is approximately half a hectare, or 5000 square meters.

The discovery was made when the security team overheard the sound of chainsaws as they were conducting a routine morning patrol in the Samboja Lestari area. Upon further inspection, our team found four men cutting logs, from newly felled trees, to be transported outside Samboja Lestari.

In response to this act of trespassing, our security team immediately contacted the local authorities to apprehend the offenders. Initial investigation revealed that the people caught on location came from a local farming group. They were also identified as those responsible for the illegal pineapple and oil palm plantation found in another area within Samboja Lestari earlier this year.

The following day, a fire was found razing a small portion of land in Samboja Lestari. The location of this burn was about 2 kilometers to the location of the illegal loggers from the day prior. Upon discovery of the fire, our field team at Samboja Lestari immediately rushed to the location to undertake firefighting actions. After nearly four hours of hard work, the fire was completely extinguished. An area of 0.59 hectares, containing around 210 trees that we have planted since the early 2000s, was completely burnt down.

Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite MSc., BOS Foundation CEO stated, "This year's dry season has been long and inevitably carries with it many risks that can jeopardize our orangutans during their rehabilitation process. In the past few years, we have been overwhelmed with land clearing incidents within our working area by individuals claiming to be local people. We have taken numerous actions, but have yet to reach a resolution. The situation has been exacerbated by fires surging within this same area. We work to ensure that the events of 2015, when over 266 hectares of Samboja Lestari's land was destroyed by fire, do not recur. At that time, we had to work day and night for 2 weeks to prevent the fires from spreading.

The plan to relocate the capital, has the potential to bring with it numerous threats to the natural ecosystems in the area and challenges to existing land ownership. If these threats are not properly addressed by the local government and law enforcement, they can jeopardize the "city forest" concept which is at the core of the vision for the new capital. Land speculators have shown blatant disregard for the ideals of the new capital and, in doing so, have disrupted the daily operations of our orangutan rehabilitation centre."



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