

Masalai i tokaut

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Illegal loggers and Forest Authority Managing Director doing secret deals in Malaysia

While the government continues to put out mixed messages about its commitment to forest industry reform, it has sent the Forest Authority Managing Director to Malaysia to meet the men behind the biggest illegal logging operations in PNG.

The purpose of the visit is to sort out which logging companies will be given which new concessions and to negotiate the appropriate financial compensations.

While controversy rages about the illegal logging operations of Concord Pacific and Rimbunan Hijau in Western Province, the Managing Director of the PNG Forest Authority has, according to sources within the National Forest Service, been on a privately funded visit to Malaysia.

The Managing Director was there to meet with the Tiong and Teck Seng families who own and control the largest logging companies in PNG including Rimbunan Hijau, Concord Pacific and Bismark Industries.

While the Managing Director has not revealed the purpose or the outcome of his visit to his staff, it is widely understood that he was in Malaysia to divide up PNG's last remaining accessible forest resources between the logging companies.

The trip to Malaysia comes only weeks after the MD and his Minister were seen in the Indonesian Province of West Papua on another private visit, this time in the company of WTK Reality the company that is logging West Sepik Province and has a great interest in the new Amanab concessions.

And it comes only days after the government softened up the World Bank, by forcing the cancellation of the Forestry and Conservation project launch workshop, in preparation for the weakening of government commitments to forest sector reform.

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