

Rain forest activist's death stirs anger

by UPI

LONG KERONG, Malaysia -- Relatives of an elderly man who fought loggers in the rain forest of Borneo have asked the Malaysian government to investigate his death. About 100 relatives and neighbors of Kelesau Naan filed a petition with police Thursday, The Times of London reported. "We believe he has been killed by people involved in logging," a nephew said. Naan, believed to be in his 70s, spent his life in a village deep in the rain forest in Sarawak. As head of the village of Long Kerong, he argued that his people had the right to determine the future of the land. He was last seen in October when he headed into the forest to check an animal trap. His skeleton was found two months later. Family members say some bones were broken, suggesting that Naan died violently. About 9,000 of the Penan people still live as nomads in the forest, making simple shelters. Most, including Naan, have adapted to changing times by combining forest hunting with some farming. The state government in Sarawak contends that the Penan do not have a right to the forest because they have traditionally been hunters instead of cultivators.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Rain forest activist's death stirs anger by UPI