



# LOGGING COMPANY SENDS POLICE TO TERRORISE VILLAGE LEADER

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In the afternoon of 13 February 2016, Flora Lakoya, her daughter, Paskaline, and grandchildren were confronted outside their rural home by a small group of armed men.

Flora feared the gang were criminals. She told her daughter to run for cover in the plantation next to the house while she bravely picked up a spade. In fact, the men were police out of uniform. They were looking for Flora's husband, Vitalis, who was asleep inside.

The group of police threatened Flora with arrest if she did not reveal the whereabouts of her husband. When Vitalis came out of the house, the officer in charge drew a pistol. He aimed it at Vitalis's leg and fired.

Luckily the shot missed Vitalis.

But, the police then grabbed and attacked Vitalis in front of his terrified wife and family. Vitalis was dragged to their vehicle and bundled inside.

The officer with the pistol fired two further shots in the air. Another policeman fired his shotgun, warning Flora if she tried to come close she would be shot.

As a result of the police beating he received outside his home and again later at the police station, Vitalis Lakoya suffered multiple lacerations and knife wounds to his face, hand and knee, bleeding from the ears, abrasions and bruising consistent with 'severe police brutality'.

We know these facts because in September this year, the policeman who fired the pistol, Kasi Puring, the Commanding officer of Bravo Section Mobile Squad 19, **was found guilty** of unlawfully going armed to cause terror and assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

But why was Vitalis Lakoya shot at and assaulted by a police squad in front of his wife, children and grandchildren?

It certainly wasn't because he was suspected of any crime or had a history of violence. Vitalis Lakoya is a respected and upstanding community elder.

He was attacked by the armed police mobile squad and suffered his injuries because, as chairman of the local landowner company he had chosen to sign a logging agreement with a rival logging company of Cakara Alam Limited.

Cakara Alam Limited is a Malaysian owned company. According to the judge, the police mobile squad were paid by the logging company to intimidate and attack Vitalis Lokoya.

Indeed, the police mobile squad were not alone that night at the Lakoya's home. Among the police officers was a civilian, one Walters Mallo. Mallo is a lawyer and an employee of Cakara Alam. He was described by the judge as an accomplice to the criminal offences that occurred.

The judge found the dispute between Cakara Alam and the landowner company was entirely civil in nature not a criminal matter. There was no justification for the police to even be at the home of Mr Lakoya.

The judge was scathing of the evidence given by Mallo, who sought to absolve Puring of any responsibility by blaming other, unnamed officers for the assault. His evidence had 'no ring of truth' and was 'lies' said the court.

The judge at sentencing concluded by saying, "*it is a very serious matter when civil servants of the State, policemen, are engaged by private companies to inflict terror upon its own citizens*".

# The Police Assault of Vitalis Lakoya

"It is a very serious matter when civil servants of the State, policemen, are engaged by private companies to inflict terror upon its own citizens"

- Judge Miviri

## The criminal assault



#1

Police arrive in plain clothes



#2

Guns are fired in front of an innocent family



#3

The father is beaten and cut



#4

He sustains serious injury



## Cakara Alam Limited

According to the National Court Malaysian logging company Cakara Alam Limited paid police to brutalise a respected PNG citizen.

Source : <http://www.paclii.org/pg/cases/PGNC/2018/381.html>

He imposed concurrent sentences of one year and two years imprisonment with hard labour on the charges of going armed to cause fear and assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

There is no record of any charges being brought against Walters Mallo or Cakara Alam Limited despite their clear culpability in this corrupt scheme.

## WHO IS CAKARA ALAM?

Cakara Alam (PNG) Limited is one of the oldest logging companies operating in Papua New Guinea. It was first registered in 1988.

Like most of its rivals, Cakara Alam is Malaysian owned. Since 2000, Cakara Alam has been wholly owned by C.A. Investments Limited, a company registered in the secretive tax haven of Labuan in Malaysia. C.A. Investments also owns Sumber Alam (PNG) Limited.

Despite their Malaysian ownership, Cakara Alam and Sumber Alam are both registered as local companies in PNG. Both have two directors, both Malaysian, Chan Char Lee and Ee Fei Lee.

Chan Char Lee also owns 50% of Tzen Pacific Limited, 50% of Landex Sawmilling Madang Limited and one-third of Tzen Resources Limited. Another third of Tzen Resources is owned by Ee Fei Lee. He also owns 50% of Tzen Lee Investments Limited. Chan Char Lee and Ee Fei Lee also jointly own SPV Investments Limited, CA Machinery Limited and Sumber Alam Mining (PNG) Limited.



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## AN ISOLATED INCIDENT OR WIDESPREAD ABUSE?

The attack on Vitalis Lakoya was not an isolated incident of violence against an innocent civilian by a rogue police officer acting on the instructions of a Malaysian owned logging company. The historical record shows it is just one more example of a much more systemic problem.



Police mobile squads have a long history of terrorising innocent people on behalf of logging companies

In 2013, a [multi-agency report](#) detailed how police officers working for the largest logging company operating in PNG was brutalising communities in East New Britain.

Ten years earlier, in 2004, the Australian broadcaster, SBS, aired a documentary that detailed allegations of serious police violence against citizens that was being sponsored by logging companies. [The program](#) included testimony by a whistleblower from within the Southern District Taskforce:

“We bashed them up, we hit them with huge irons...I apologise for what I have done but I followed orders because I wanted bread and butter like any other employee.”

SBS had also detailed [similar allegations in 2001](#):

“The Papua New Guinea Police Force says it’s investigating numerous complaints that its police officers are acting as private enforcers for logging companies. Annie Kajir, who documented many of those complaints, says police are accused of threatening and brutalising landowners..... Even forcing some people into acts of bestiality. ‘Getting on their knees crawling with the gun at their back. Telling them to crawl so many distance. Being shot at in the presence of families, they haven’t done anything wrong, these are peaceful people living there with guns being fired. Guns being carried around by un-uniformed policemen, ... telling people to carry dogs on their backs and to walk and to, you know, suck the dog’s, you know? Those are some

of the allegations we have. Q. So serious abuses of human rights? A. Serious abuses of human rights.”

Much more recently, in 2016, the Supreme Court refused to throw out a claim against logging company Rimbunan Hijau that it was orchestrating police brutality. In that case the complainant alleged he was thrown out of a three metre high window, threatened at gun point, gun-butted, lashed with wooden sticks and a bulldozer fan belt, punched and kicked and cut with a bush knife. –

In 2004, Masalai i Tokaut detailed police abuses on behalf of logging companies dating back over the previous five years. The sources for the allegations included leaked reports from the National Intelligence Organisation.

In West Sepik Province, local people allege both the police and the army are used to protect and defend illegal logging under Special Agriculture Business Leases, as explained in this short video –

