

Press Cuttings

Staff eyes on 'illegal cutting' – Post Courier 22 Feb 2008

ILLEGAL logging is allegedly rampant in parts of Papua New Guinea.

The PNG Forest Authority has identified several illegal logging sites in the Southern region and has stopped one operation.

This is in the Neola area in the Central Province along the Hiritano Highway. Steps are also being taken to stop illegal logging in the Vailala timber area.

Southern region Forest Authority acting area manager Mark Betuels claimed that illegal logging was rampant in the region.

Mr. Betuels said forest officers were investigating logging in the area but said he was not in a position to release any information on the matter to the media.

The Post Courier went to interview the National Forest Authority (NFA) managing director Kanawi Pours on what actions they were taking to deal with illegal logging in the country.

But Mr. Pours referred the Post Courier to the NFA divisional services field manager Ben Taupa who referred Post Courier back to the managing director, saying the matter was sensitive and he should be in a better position to release information to the media.

From information released by Central Province administration through its forest officer Chris Kalogo, illegal logging is going in parts of the Central province.

Mr. Kalogo named several companies he claimed were involved in illegally harvesting timber.

He said his office was not aware of any license being issued to any company for that area.

We know of two TA licenses in the area which are Wood Hill Bobeda Timber Authority number 3-20 and Nama Vanamba Timber Authority number 3-118.

The Post Courier visited the Noela area when there was active logging two weeks ago before it was closed down by the forestry authority last week.

Noela landowner Joe Obu claimed a major company's subsidiary was harvesting logs in the area. However, company management through an email said their operation in the area was legal.

That project was reportedly closed down by the Forest Authority last week.