
[Solomon Islands: Women wounded by logging company for defending their land](#)

Logging operations of Omex Industry Limited in Boloboe land on Vella La Vella island, Western Province of the country, have long been a subject of disputes and legal battles. Over the weekend of the end of July a tragedy took place.

A group of local women went into the forest to demonstrate against the operation which they consider illegal. Their effort to protect their right over the land and their resources was suppressed by the security guards of the company, who –armed with knives, sticks, bow and arrows and stones- attacked and injured the defenseless group of women. Serious cuts, bone fracture and diverse wounds were the result of such attack.

According to reports from Moffat Mamu, published in the Solomon Star on 30 July 2007, “a spokesman from Leona village - speaking on condition of not being named - said that the community are shocked by this attack on defenceless women from their community.” “It is the first time that women are hurt in such a way while demonstrating against logging and the Gizo Police takes the case very seriously,” he said. “These women are mothers of our children, trying to protect their right and resources,” the village elder said.

The Western Province's Council of Women reacted promptly to the attack, which they described “as cruel and inhumane”, and in a press statement it called on national authorities to condemn the attack and suspend the logging license of the company on the grounds that it had not respected the women who are also mothers and have children to care for and nurture.

According to Radio New Zealand Internacional, “The president of the National Council of Women, Hilda Kari, declared it is time for the government to look again at the issues involved in the forestry industry. She says, however, that it relies so much on the revenues from logging that it's very hard to get through to them about the problems.

But, Mrs Kari says the government needs to act now. “They should reconsider looking at all these development areas in the logging industry; what kind of people are in the field, whether or not they should be bringing foreigners to be in the employment sector in this area or using Solomon Islanders in this labour force, rather than bringing these people who are causing these problems.”

Mrs Kari is also condemning the sexual exploitation of children which is reported to be occurring near some logging camps.”

Article based on: “Logging Guards Injure 6 Women”, Solomon Star, 30 July 2007, Moffat Mamu, sent by Brian Brunton, Alotau Environment , e-mail: alotauen@online.net.pg; “Solomon Islands National Council of Women condemns logging incident”, Radio New Zealand International, <http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=34038>; “Women Call for Suspension of Logging License”, Edner Rence, Solomon Times Online, <http://www.solomontimes.com/news.aspx?nwID=472>

