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## **Hearings open in lawsuit against Rettet den Regenwald e.V. (Rainforest Rescue)**

The first day of hearings in the case against [Rettet den Regenwald](#) took place at the Hamburg Regional Court on January 22nd, 2021. Kenertec, an Indonesian company, is suing the NGO for speaking out against the destruction of rainforest in Papua in a letter addressed to Siemens and Nordex four years ago. The core issue is the burning of residual wood after the rainforest was cleared to create new palm oil plantations.

Kenertec, a manufacturer of wind turbines, is the plaintiff in Hamburg. The environmentalists, however, are not actually accusing Kenertec itself of rainforest destruction, but rather a business partner of the company, the Korindo group. In the study [“Burning Paradise”](#) by the NGO Mighty Earth and numerous other studies and reports, Korindo is accused of wholesale destruction of rainforests and violating the rights of indigenous peoples in the Indonesian provinces of Papua and North Moluccas. The [BBC also recently reported on the issue](#).

“Already on the first day of hearings, it became apparent that the strategy of Kenertec and Korindo is not working out – the companies had probably pictured dragging environmentalists into court to be an easier solution than it turned out to be,” says Rettet den Regenwald Chairperson Bettina Behrend.

Kenertec had also sued the US-based [Center for International Policy](#) (CIP), one of several organizations that provide funding for Mighty Earth. However, the court advised Kenertec’s attorneys that CIP could not be prosecuted solely on the basis of this funding. The court even questioned whether Kenertec had standing to sue in the first place.

“The court indicated to Kenertec that, given the volume of videos, photos, satellite images, studies and testimony submitted by Rettet den Regenwald and CIP, simply denying that fires were set will not be enough,” says media lawyer Prof. Roger Mann, who is representing Rettet den Regenwald.

As expected, the court proposed an out-of-court settlement between the environmentalists and Kenertec. “We will review our options in this regard with very great care. After all, Korindo is creating facts on the ground in Papua – without regard for people or the environment,” Behrend notes.

If the case continues, it will be vital to spell out the reality on the ground in Papua to the court in Hamburg. “We will use the hearings to wake up the public and cast an even harsher light on the destruction of the rainforest,” says Rettet den Regenwald Vice-Chair and Indonesia expert Marianne Klute.

The court is expected to rule on the further progress of the case within the next two months.

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For further information, legal assessments, interview requests and images, please contact:

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