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Press Release

Buyat villagers still feel comfortable to live at Buyat village; Witness of ALS emphasizes the importance to keep 'chain of custody' in sample analysis process.

(Manado, 12 May 2006). The court hearing of the criminal case trial against PT NMR is continued today, presenting four witnesses from PT NMR. PT NMR presented three Buyat villagers as Fact Witnesses. They were Madjid Esing, Robert Sasuwuhe, and Ibu Rahima Jumaidi. PT NMR also presented Sri Bimo Andy Putro from ALS Indonesia, an international laboratory company.

In his testimonies, Madjid Esing as the first person living at Buyat Pante said, "I sometimes have illness, but normally I get well in one day or two. Nothing changes in our life before and after the presence of PT NMR." He added "I'd never found any difficulty in catching fishes at Buyat as long as I live here. My family and I always eat fish we caught."

Another fact witness, Robert Sasuwuhe, testified that he was once intimidated to take part in a campaign against the presence of PT NMR at Buyat bay by members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). "We were asked to take part in demonstrations against PT NMR. When I once refused to do so, I was beaten up," said Robert Sasuwuhe. As a Security Chief, Robert Sasuwuhe said that many Buyat Pante villagers who were relocated to Duminanga Village had now returned to Buyat Pante village to catch fish at the Bay.

The fourth witnesses, Ibu Rahima Jumaidi, gave the same testimonies. She said that [the presence of PT NMR) had resulted in no impact to the number of fishes caught by her husband who had been working as a fisherman for more than twenty years. Ibu Rahima said, "My family and I have long eaten fishes caught at Buyat bay, and until now we are still fine and we get no mysterious diseases." In her testimony, it was revealed that Ibu Rahima was once asked by irresponsible NGOs to cry in front of the camera when she welcomed a group of reporters coming to her village when her daughter got sick.

The first fact and expert witness presented in today's court hearing was Sribimo Andy Putro, Senior Laboratory Supervisor of ALS Indonesia. In his testimony, Sri Bimo said the chain of custody was very important in analyzing a sample. If the principle of chain custody is not complied with, the laboratory test results might not be accurate. "In analyzing a sample, the most important thing is that the sample to be tested should not be

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contaminated by anything before being analyzed,” said Sri Bimo. ALS is an independent international laboratory company, currently operating in 17 countries, including Indonesia. As a private company, ALS has secured accreditation from the National Accreditation Committee (KAN) for the high standards the company has applied in its laboratory analysis processes. The Ministry of environment has asked ALS to carry out environmental researches in many regions.”

Obviously, today’s hearing denied the testimonies of the witnesses presented by the prosecutors who accuse PT NMR of polluting Buyat bay and causing disadvantages to people living around Buyat bay. “The testimonies given by the fact witnesses prove that the accusations given by the prosecutor are legally baseless,” said Luhut MP. Pangaribuan, one of PT NMR’s legal advisors.

In the next court hearings, PT NMR will present other fact and expert witnesses to prove that in operating its mine, PT NMR always complies with the prevailing laws and regulations in Indonesia.###