

Laudation for Komeok Joe and Peter Kallang

by Kaspar Müller

**«ANYONE WHO HAS UNDERSTOOD AND FAILS TO ACT
HAS NOT UNDERSTOOD»**

Bruno Manser

It is a big privilege to present you today the

«Bruno Manser Prize for Moral Courage».

You receive this award in the name of all of us and we all do it with our deepest and profoundest respect for your long engagement in favour of the rights of indigenous people and for the protection of the rain forest. Congratulations and thank you for all what you have done and what you have achieved.

Komeok, since you met Bruno in 1989, you have been a faithful and true-hearted companion of Bruno and of the concerns of the Penans. Improved rights of indigenous people, saved rain forests in the Selungo region, an exemplary mapping project and many other important actions are part of your impressive lifework. Such achievements would never have been possible without your more than 20 years of reliable engagement for the Penans, and without your courage.

Peter, as Chairman of Save Rivers, you curbed a dangerous development. In a world of increasingly bad news, the cancelation of the Baram dam, the cancelation of the resettlement of 20'000 indigenous people, the return of the expropriated land to them and

the conservation of the remaining rain forests was for me one of the happiest news. Yes, it is still possible to motivate governments to change their mind, even against strong economic lobbying of small but powerful groups, yes, this is a miracle. And, this was possible thanks to your unbelievable and wise commitment, and your admirable moral courage.

It is also motivating to see how open and constructively you cooperate with the team of the Bruno Manser Fonds. This cooperation is of unprecedented value. It demonstrates that different cultures can and wish to work together. We never should forget that we all live on the same planet and we all wish to protect it. Therefore, we also include in our compliments all your colleagues and team members in Sarawak and in Switzerland who are constantly fostering you with their conviction and commitment.

Komeok and Peter, you both have understood and you have not failed to act. You have proved leadership and empowered indigenous people as well as us. This is why you deserve this award for moral courage.

Bruno Manser wrote in 1997:

«Every small action for life is like a star on the dark sky»

Your work is much more than a star on the dark sky. Bruno, who disappeared on the 25th May 2000, 16 years ago, would be very proud of you.

Basel, May 21th, 2016