

Malaysian tribal leader demands FINE after British woman 'strips naked on top of mountain'

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A MALAYSIAN tribal chief has called upon British tourists who allegedly stripped naked on top of a mountain to pay a fine of ten buffalo or face jail.

Eleanor Hawkins and the group suspected of stripping naked before taking pictures on Mount Kinabalu

British tourist Eleanor Hawkins, 23, was detained by Malaysian authorities on suspicion of stripping NAKED on the mountain in Malaysia along with three other tourists - two Canadian siblings and a Dutch male - after they were suspected of removing their clothes before taking pictures on Mount Kinabalu.

Malaysian police obtained a court order to detain the foreigners for four days and could charge them with indecent behaviour, according to police commissioner Jalaluddin Abdul Rahman.

They were believed to be part of a group of 10 people who stripped naked and took pictures on the mountain on May 30.

Last night it was reported that one local tribe chief had asked the tourists for a 'sogit' or a fine of ten buffalo or face jail.

Priest Tindarama Aman Sirom Simbuna said: "The tourists who angered the guardian of the mountain should pay for their mistakes by giving sogit.

'This should be in the form of ten male or female buffalo'.

The alleged incident in Malaysia happened just days before a deadly earthquake hit the region - and now outraged locals appear to have BLAMED the tourists for the tragedy.

The mountain is believed to be a resting place for the spirits of the departed and is a sacred place for the indigenous people.

In response to her arrest, the father of Ms Hawkins appealed to Malaysian authorities to release his daughter and said he has "every faith in their judicial system".

Tim Hawkins said: "I would like to appeal to the Malaysian authorities. I have got every faith in their judicial system. I just hope they don't make an example of them after the tragic earthquake."

Ms Hawkins has been detained in Malaysia

Ms Hawkins started travelling around Asia in January

Having spoke to his daughter earlier today, Mr Hawkins also revealed his daughter was "obviously upset" but "kind of relieved because she saw it coming".

He said: "She's pretty scared. But it was good to speak to her."

Mr Hawkins added: "It's good to know where she is. It is not the kind of situation you envisage when your daughter goes travelling."

Group of backpackers strip on top of Malaysian mountain Mount Kinabalu causing offence

Ms Hawkins studied for a Masters in aeronautics and aerospace engineering and started travelling around Asia in January.

She has previously worked as a horse riding instructor in the US as part of a Camp America programme.

Ms Hawkins, from Derby, was detained at a Sabah airport on Tuesday while trying to fly to Kuala Lumpur.

On the same day, Canadians Lindsey and Danielle Petersen and Dutch tourist Dylan Snel are understood to have surrendered themselves at a police station in Sabah.

The group appeared in court on Wednesday and were remanded in custody until Saturday.

They are now in the central jail in Kepyayan, in the city of Kota Kinabalu.

A local police chief confirmed that authorities are looking for the six other tourists in the suspected group.

He said: "We detained all four of them on Tuesday... and yes we are still searching for the other six tourists, and we will catch them."

Mount Kinabalu is considered sacred in Malaysia

The alleged stripping came days after a magnitude 5.9 earthquake rocked the area last Friday and sent rocks and boulders racing down the 13,453-foot-high mountain in Sabah.

A total of 18 people were killed in the disaster - including nine Singaporeans, six Malaysians and a Filipino, a Chinese and a Japanese national.

Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Joseph Pairin Kitingan said the foreigners showed "disrespect to the sacred mountain" by posing naked at the peak.

He added that a special ritual will be conducted to "appease the mountain spirit."

However, Masidi Manjun, Sabah's provincial tourism minister, said the idea that the naked photos had caused the earthquake was "misconstrued".

He said: "I never said that they actually caused the earthquake but their actions were against the people of the largest tribe in Sabah. The mountain is a revered and sacred site."

The internet has exploded in recent weeks with nude pictures of tourists in front of famous places - which has so far seen foreigners being fined, deported and even BANNED from entering countries.