

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**The World's Highest and Asia's First Via Ferrata – Mountain Torq on Mount Kinabalu offers the newest mountaineering sport in Asia**

- **via ferrata allows people of all ages to traverse rock faces previously only accessible to mountaineers and rock climbers**
- **one of the safest mountaineering sports requiring no prior training or technical expertise**

Mt Kinabalu, Sabah, MALAYSIA – Mountain Torq, the world's highest and Asia's first via ferrata opened in December 2007 offering a new, exhilarating, adrenalin-charged experience to climbers and hikers to world heritage site, Mount Kinabalu. A via ferrata (or 'iron road' in Italian), is a continuous protected mountain path. It consists of a series of steel rungs, rails and cables embedded into the rock face, opening up routes to the average hiker that were previously only accessible to experienced rock climbers and mountaineers with specialized equipment. Mountain Torq's via ferrata enables climbers and non-climbers to experience the thrill of mountain climbing in complete safety, while taking in the spectacular mountain surroundings and summit views.

Located at Mount Kinabalu's Pana Laban rock face, Mountain Torq's via ferrata begins at 3,400 meters and ends at 3,800 meters, making it the world's highest via ferrata. It is an alternative route giving access to the top of Mount Kinabalu (4095m a.s.l.). The world's second highest via ferrata, at 3,343 meters, is found halfway across the globe in the Italian Dolomites called the Marmolada West ridge. Mountain Torq's via ferrata is approximately 1.2 kilometers and traverses routes of varying difficulty. It thus caters to all levels of experience, from beginners to intermediate hikers and climbers. The more challenging and physically demanding routes, suited to those with above average fitness levels, will take climbers off-the-beaten track and includes negotiating a 22m foot bridge suspended at a breathtaking 3,600m a.s.l.

Said Wilfred Tok, Founder of Mountain Torq Sdn Bhd (MT), "Aside from its record-breaking height that has been certified by Guinness World Records™, the introduction of Mountain Torq's via ferrata at Mount Kinabalu is also significant for the fact that it is Asia's newest mountaineering sport. Unlike other mountaineering or climbing activities, it is suitable for all ages, from 10 to 70 years and above. As long as you know how to and are still able to climb a ladder, you will be able to negotiate the via ferrata. All that is needed is a sprit of adventure, the average fitness level of a normal mountain hiker and no fear of heights."

Mountain Torq's via ferrata conforms to the highest international safety standards. It was constructed using CE Mark-approved materials from France, which means that they satisfy stringent European Union quality standards. The via ferrata is able to withstand up to 3 tones of weight. Safety practices developed and prescribed by UIAA (the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation) for mountaineering sports are adhered to strictly. All equipment used in the sport is UIAA certified and participants are guided at all times by activity trainers who have undergone rigorous training, with regular skills upgrading based on an UIAA-endorsed syllabus. Furthermore, a continuous belay system is employed throughout the via ferrata route wherein climbers are always hooked up to a guideline, making any deviation from the route virtually impossible.

Of the various mountain climbing activities, via ferrata boasts one of the highest safety records, no mean feat considering its long history. Beginning in Europe, with increasing popularity elsewhere, especially in North America, the leisure mountaineering sport had its roots in World War I. The first via ferrata was constructed and used by the Italian military to move men and equipment in the Italian Dolomites across to Austria. Today, there

are about 500 via ferrate¹ in the world, predominately in Italy, Germany, France, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland, Spain and a few places in the United States and Canada.

Added Wilfred Tok, "We are delighted in being able to play a part in the development of Mount Kinabalu and the exotic island of Borneo as a world class destination for sports and adventure tourists. This is the first time a mountaineering activity is formally being introduced to Mount Kinabalu since 1964, when Kinabalu Park was first opened to the public. With Mountain Torq, Mount Kinabalu will entice travelers beyond just scaling the mountain. With this latest mountaineering activity, we can confidently say that Borneo is now a world class adventure destination with a myriad of ocean and mountain activities."

In addition to the via ferrata, Mountain Torq is also South East Asia's first mountaineering training centre, by offering other mountaineering activities like sports/rock climbing and rappelling courses. With Mountain Torq's via ferrata, tour operators will now be able to offer travelers a truly memorable and unique itinerary which will enhance their whole experience of beautiful Borneo and set it apart as a destination rivaled by few, if any.

About Mountain Torq

Mountain Torq Sdn Bhd is based on Mount Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. The management team is made up of South-East Asia's most accomplished mountain climbers, instructors and educators with a shared passion for the outdoors. Together with their team of staff, they seek to provide adventure tourists with the skills, knowledge and opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors safely and responsibly. MT is committed towards ecotourism and believes in developing the talents of the local community by providing training and gainful employment for members from these communities.

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¹ 'Via ferrate' is the plural of 'via ferrata'