

Actions, demos, protests...

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Residents close off waste disposal ducts

Residents from the village of Tangkahan in the Medan Belawan sub-district of Medan, North Sumatra, closed off eight waste disposal ducts from the company PT Kawasan Industri Medan (PT KIM) on August 20. The action was in protest over the disposal of waste that flows past the area in which they live.

"We have long been patient. Several times we have complained to PT KIM over the waste. They have not responded. We have even met with the relevant people in the company", said 61-year-old Tangkahan resident Ngadi adding that they have been asking the company to improve waste management since 2002.

According to Ngadi, the waste has caused well water to turn black and smelly and as a result residents have had to purchase water to fulfil their drinking needs. "A number of residents have also suffered from skin irritations", said Ngadi.

The residents, who voluntarily donated funds and worked collectively to block off the waste disposal ducts, said they were no longer willing to be patient and if there is no response from PT KIM, the ducts would remain closed permanently. (Kompas Cyber Media, 21/8/2006)

Land eviction victims protest Kodo Dam project

Around 1,000 residents representing 23,000 people who were evicted to make way for the Koto Panjang hydroelectric dam project supplying power to the Kampar regency in Riau province and part of West Sumatra, demonstrated in the provincial capital of Pekanbaru on August 21. The protest was held to coincide with a visit by five Japanese parliamentary representatives. The Japan Bank for International Corporation (JBIC) provided loans for the construction of the dam.

"They have come from Kampar and West Sumatra. They originate from 10 villages that in 1997 were flooded [to make way] for the dam construction. A promise to relocate their settlements and provide reasonable employment has still not been fulfilled", said the executive director of the Riau chapter of the Indonesian Environment Forum (Walhi), Johny S Mundung.

The protesters are demanding that Japan be held liable for the funds given to Indonesia for the dam, much of which was embezzled, as well as assisting them to rebuild their lives. They also called on the Japanese government not stop providing assistance to Indonesia if the result only brings suffering to the people. (Kompas Cyber Media, 21/8/2006)

Papuan workers demand outstanding wages, severance pay

Dozens of former employees from the plywood company PT Prabu Alaska in the West Papua regency of Fak Fak demonstrated at the State Palace in Jakarta on August 22 demanding the payment of outstanding severance pay and wages.

In speeches the workers said they were arbitrarily dismissed by the company two years ago but have still not received any severance pay. "We have been neglected for a year. During this time none of us have been paid our wages", said action coordinator Hermanus. The protesters also called on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to order the police to arrest PT Prabu Alaska boss Po Suwandi, who is already on the wanted list.

Hermanus said that the former employees, who have been in Jakarta since last year, have been occupying Po Suwandi's home at the Millenium Gardens in the Jakarta satellite city of Tangerang. "Just in order to live, we have been forced to do casual jobs such as washing cars and the like. Some assistance has also been provided by the church", he said.

(Detik.com, 22/8/2006)

Mud disaster victims demand Lapindo buy their houses

Thousands of residents from the village of Kedungbendo and the Tanggulangin Anggun Sejahtera housing estate in the East Java city of Sidoarjo demonstrated at the governor's audience hall on August 22 demanding the PT Lapindo Brantas purchase their houses that have been inundated by mud.

In speeches the protesters demanded that Lapindo immediately fulfil its promise to compensate them for the cost of renting houses and transport. They also said that they no longer trusted the Sidoarjo regency Joint Disaster Relief Team because it is taking too long to deal with the disaster and has failed to keep its promises. (Liputan 6, (22/8/2006)

Mud disaster victims condemn deputy-regent for siding with Lapindo

Around 2,000 residents of the Tanggulangin Anggun Sejahtera housing estate and the village of Kedungbendo demonstrated at the governor's audience hall in the East Java city of Sidoarjo on August 22. The protesters were condemning Sidoarjo deputy regent Syaiful Illah, who is also the head of the Sidoarjo regency Joint Disaster Relief Team, which

they said is siding with PT Lapindo Brantas.

The protesters, who came from the Relief Coordination Forum for Victims of Mud and Gas (FKPKLG), also brought a number of posters and banners with messages such as "The rulers are free, the people suffer", "Syaiful is Lapindo's lackey" and "Lapindo and Syaiful must buy our houses". They also brought posters illustrating their homes being inundated with mud and a bier that was placed in front of the audience hall with the names of the Lapindo mud disaster victims. (Detik.com, 22/8/2006)

Sheraton Hotel employees demand payment of wages

Dozens of employees from the Yogyakarta Sheraton Mustika Hotel demonstrated at the Hotel Indonesia roundabout in Central Jakarta on August 22. They were demanding the full payment of wages as they had only been receiving 125,000 rupiah per month since the earthquake hit Yogyakarta and Central Java in May.

The demonstrators' disappointment with the hotel owner Mooryati Soedibyo was added to by the holding of the Miss Indonesia 2006 pageant that reaped hundreds of millions of rupiah. The protesters also held a happening art action or street theater that made fun of Soedibyo and Miss Indonesia 2005 finalist Nadine Chandrawinata.

The employees are threatening to continue protesting until their demands are met and also plan to target the House of Representatives (DPR), the Sheraton Hotel and the Ombudsman's office. The climax will be a demonstration at the Miss Indonesia 2006 pageant finals on August 25 that will be held at the Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park in East Jakarta. (Liputan 6, 23/8/2006)

Residents clash with public order officials in Cipinang

Dozens of city public order officials (Tramtib) were involved in a clash with residents living alongside the Cipinang River in East Java when they tried forcibly evicting them on August 23. A number of residents and officials were injured in the incident. The 7,200 square area of land has long been the subject of a dispute after the courts declared that Budiman Santoso owned the land. Police were forced to fire warning shots in order to restore order. (Liputan 6, 24/8/2006)

Residents oppose construction of power plant

Residents in the Central Java regency of Jepara demonstrated on August 23 against the planned construction of the PLTU Kartini coal-fired power plant.

"We oppose the PTLU being built at this location", said Forum for Environmental Concerns (FPL) chairperson Warkoyo adding that they had demonstrated repeatedly at the construction site located at the Karanggondang village on the edge of the Dukuh Empu Rancak beach.

The Kartini power plant, which will cover 60 hectares and cost 5 trillion rupiah, is being built by a consortium of 14 overseas contractors from China, South Korea, Japan, India and Malaysia. (Tempo Interactive, 23/8/2006)

Chicken traders strike in Tasikmalaya

Around 200 chicken meat traders in the West Java city of Tasikmalaya went on strike on August 24 over the price chickens which has jumping from 11,000 to 20,000 rupiah per bird over the last month. As a result consumers are no longer willing to buy from them.

"All of the traders are on strike because the cost of chickens is unreasonable", said one of the traders adding that prices are even higher than during Lebaran celebrations following the fasting month. (Tempo Interactive, 24/8/2006)

Students protest against 'superfluous' projects

Students from a number of tertiary education institutions in the province of Bengkulu in South Sumatra protested on August 25 calling on the Bengkulu Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) to refuse to endorse a 538.7 billion rupiah budget for a public utilities and tourism project. The students said that the project, which was initiated by the Bengkulu governor Agusrin M. Najamudin, was superfluous and a waste of the regional budget. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Thousands of farmers demand right to work land

Around 5,000 farmers from the regencies of Batang, Pekalongan and Temanggung demonstrated in the

Central Java provincial of Semarang recently demanding protection of their right to work land controlled by the state-owned forestry firm Perhutani. They also called on Perhutani to release a part of the land for the farmers' use.

The farmers said they could no longer tolerate intimidation by Perhutani officials who tried to force them to replace their rice and dry season crops with cloves and coffee. The farmers said that they had rejected this because they need food crops in to live.

A number of representatives of the farms were invited to meet with Perhutani officials but because Perhutani would only promise to hold further discussions over the government owned land the protesters left the meeting and continued the action at the Central Java DPRD. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Street traders setup shop at Medan parliament building

Dozens of street traders setup shop on the ground of the Medan DPRD building on August 23 in protest against civil service police officers who recently overturned their carts and evicted them from their place of trade. The traders threatened to remain at the DPRD until legislators could guarantee that they would not be evicted again. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Makassar high school students hold second strike action

Hundreds of students and teachers from the State High School 9 in the South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar went on strike for the second time on August 25. The second action was held because the school principle, Jamaluddin, was still refusing to resign. On Monday last week, students and teachers demanded that Jamaluddin resign over accusations of causing financial losses to students and the inflation of funds when new students were accepted by the school. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Thousands of farmers demonstrate in Central Java

Thousands of farmers from the Batang Pekalongan Farmers and Fishers Forum for Struggle (FP2NBP) demonstrated at the forestry office in Semarang on August 24. They were demanding a that a resolution be found to a number of land disputes involving

concessions owned by the PT Pagelaran Batang, PT Tratak and a land case in Banjar Negara.

The protesters, who arrived at the forestry office in hundreds of trucks adorned with effigies made of straw, immediately held speeches detailing the dozens of unresolved land disputes. The large number of demonstrators forced police to close of Jl. Pahlawan and redirect traffic. Following the action at the forestry offices, the protesters that included women, children and elderly people, plan to demonstrate at the East Java DPRD. (Detik.com, 25/8/2006)

Pelindo accused of appropriating land

Around 100 residents demonstrated at the office of the state-owned port management company Pelindo II in city of Cilegon in the West Java regency of Banten on August 24. The protesters accused the company of appropriating 2.3 hectares of land owned by the residents without providing any compensation. The action was held in conjunction with a Cilegon District Court hearing over the land dispute. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Residents demand foreign NGO be dissolved

Around 100 residents in Medan demonstrated at the offices of the Samaritans Purse Foundation on August 24. They were demanding that the non-government organisation (NGO) be dissolved because it was causing cause uneasiness and nervousness among residents. The protesters accused the US based NGO of carrying out activities who's real goal was to get people to change their religion by enticing them with financial assistance. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Sugar factor workers demand bonuses

Hundreds of employees from the Takalar Sugar Factory in Makassar went on strike on August 25 demanding bonuses that the management has promised to pay on several occasions. The workers were also disappointed with the company because it had been making big profits from the high price of sugar while it paid no attention to their welfare. (Liputan 6, 25/8/2006)

Worker demonstration in Cimahi end in chaos

Hundreds of workers from the company PT Korin

Garmentama in the Cimahi city of West Java demonstrated recently at the municipal government officers. The protesters, the majority of whom were women, accused the mayor of Cimahi, Itoch Tohija, of siding with the company, which failed to pay them severance pay after the company went bankrupt on August 1.

The demonstration became chaotic when protesters battered down the front gates and tried to force their way onto the company offices in order meet with Tohija. A number of protesters were trampled on and injured during the incident. Although they succeeded in breaking down the gate they were unable to enter the offices that were tightly guarded by dozens of civil service police. (Liputan 6, 26/8/2006)

Urban poor activists demand free education, healthcare

Hundreds of protester from the Urban Poor Union (SMRK) held simultaneous protest actions across eight sub-districts in West Java on August 24 demanding free education and healthcare and the fair distribution of rice to the poor.

The coordinator of SMRK, Marlo, said that the demonstrations were part of preparations for a larger action in November. "During this action we are calling on the sub-district heads, the village administrative heads and State Logistic Agency (Bulog) to be fair in the distribution of rice for the poor", he said. The protesters also called for free education up to the university level, free health care, and for firm action to be taken against schools that still collect payments from students. (SRMK News, 26/8/2006)