

Report on Papernas mass gathering

Wednesday 30 January 2008, by [Papernas](#) (Date first published: 30 January 2008).

On 15-16 January 2008 organizations which are affiliated to The National Liberation Party of Unity (PAPERNAS); Riau Movement, Central movement of Riau People, Urban Poor union organized mass gathering in Pekanbaru, capital of Riau Provinces.

The farmers and the poor who came from five districts traveled for eight to ten hours to reach the point. The preparation to this gathering was carried out for the last three months. They collect daily dues, painted the banners and placard and organized the participants.

January is an anniversary of People's unity in struggle to retake their land. Through the unity, farmers win several battles. Recently, on 6-10 December, 2007, simultaneous reclaimed to retake their traditional land in sub district of Suluk Bongkal, Pantai Cermin, Melibur, Blutu, recorded another victory. A settlement for 150 family were build in that areas.

In this mass gathering, they urged the government to wipe out corruptor; illegal logging and the land plunder who have become parasites of people's economy. So far 122 corruption cases in Riau was investigated by corruption eradication committees then transmitted to the police and Supreme Court.

Riau soil is rich with natural resources; are reside in the bowels of is earth, plantation are grows in its land.

Chevron Pacific Indonesia were installed its wealth in 3,2 million hectares land and has been taking 2 billion barrel.

People's land were taken since government of Suharto who provided privileged Rights to exploit forest resources to the certain private company, soon private company install their wealth in Riau as we;; as other provinces in Sumatra and Kalimantan island.

In Riau more than half hectares were granted to pulp company, included 300.000 hectares land has been granted to PT Arara Abadi.

Despite of these reaches people are living in poverty. 50 percentages of five million populations in Riau are living under poverty line. 54% from the total of 15 years-17 years were drop out from the school due to the crisis.

" Farmers has been demonstrated the struggle to win back their rights and has proved us their slogan along the reform action; retake, plant on, and guard the land." Land supposed to be a source of living and welfare. How can the land become our sources of living and give us welfare if more than half million hectares were granted to the private company" . Said Dita Sari, PAPERNAS' advisory council. In this mass gathering, the farmers promote Rinaldi, former chairperson of SEGERA who currently become head of PAPERNAS Riau to be their candidate for governor election.

Without mass mobilization the struggle will not gain great things, the mobilization without political consciousness will be easily defeated. Therefore, we, the people must take over politic to take back all the right that is plundered by the elites, she said to the masses.

Nationalized mining and oil industries for people's welfare, revoke privilege rights exploit the forest were enthusiastically chanted by the people.

PAPERNAS

THE NATIONAL LIBERATION PARTY OF UNITY

Jln. Tebet Dalam IIG No. 1, Jakarta Selatan, 12820.

Telp/Fax: 021-8354513. Email: papernas yahoo.com

Indonesia: Riau farmers fight for their rights

Introduction by Greenleft Weekley: This is a statement by the National Liberation Party of Unity (Papernas). One of the main organisations that founded Papernas is the People's Democratic Party (PRD), which played a leading role in the mass movement that overthrew Suharto in 1998. The PRD is building Papernas to continue the struggle against the neoliberal anti-poor policies that have been continued by post-Suharto governments.

On January 15 and 16, a number of organisations affiliated to Papernas — the Riau Movement, the Central movement of Riau People, and the Urban Poor Union — organised a mass gathering in Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau province, in order to advance the struggle for their rights.

Nearly 3,000 farmers and the poor came from five districts, travelling for up to ten hours. The preparation for the gathering was carried out over three months — collecting daily dues, painting banners and placards and organising participants.

Riau farmers have won several recent battles. On 6-10 December, simultaneous take-overs of traditional land by farmers took place in the subdistricts of Suluk Bongkal, Pantai Cermin, Melibur and Blutu.

At the mass gathering, farmers urged the government to wipe out corruption, illegal logging and the land plunderers who have become parasites on the economy. So far 122 corruption cases in Riau have been investigated by corruption eradication committees and then transmitted to the police and Supreme Court.

Riau's soil is rich with natural resources. Chevron Pacific Indonesia has eared much wealth through taking 3.2 million hectares of land and extracting 2 billion barrels of oil.

People's land has been taken over ever since the government of Suharto, which provided privileged rights to exploit forest resources to certain private companies. In Riau more than half the land was granted to pulp companies, including 300,000 hectares of land granted to PT Arara Abadi.

Of the five million people who live in Riau, 50% live under the poverty line.

Dita Sari, a member of Papernas' advisory council, told the gathering: "Farmers have been demonstrating to win back their rights and have raised the slogan: 'retake, plant on, and guard the

land’.

“Land is supposed to be a source of life and welfare. How can land do this if more than half a million hectares are granted to private companies?”

“Without mass mobilisation the struggle of farmers will not gain great things”, Sari said.

“Mobilisation without political consciousness will be easily defeated. Therefore, we, the people must take over politics in order to take back all the rights that have been plundered by the elites.”

At the gathering, the farmers promoted Rinaldi, the current head of Papernas in Riau, to be their candidate for governor in the coming election. The demonstrators enthusiastically chanted slogans in favour of the nationalisation of mining and oil industries so they can be run for people’s welfare and revoking the privileges granted to private companies to exploit Riau’s forests.

** From: International News, Green Left Weekly issue #738 6 February 2008.*