

Actions, demos, protests...

Indonesia Roundup #27 - August 7-13, 2006

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Simultaneous anti-Israeli protests held across the country

Actions opposing Israeli aggression in Palestine and Lebanon were held simultaneously in various parts of the country on August 6.

In the Luwuk sub-district of Banggai regency, Central Sulawesi, hundreds of Muslims took part in an anti-Israeli protest in which they trampled on and set fire to Israeli flags.

In the West Java city of Bekasi thousands of Muslims attended an anti-Israel sermon and a mass meeting. In addition to collecting donations to assist the people of Lebanon a registration of those interested in joining a holy war was also organised.

In the North Sumatra provincial capital of Medan, demonstrators and police pushed and shoved each other when protesters tried to approach the US Consulate General. The protesters, who came from civil groups and Islamic mass organisations, called on the international community to assist in ending Israeli aggression and violence in the Middle East.

Support and solidarity for the people of Palestine and Lebanon was also expressed in a joint prayer in the South Sumatra city of Palembang. Thousands of people including religious scholars, teachers and local people held a prayer recitation on the grounds of the South Sumatra provincial government offices.

An anti Israeli demonstration in Tanjung Pinang, Riau province, was marked by the burning of photographs and effigies of US President George Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Protests against Israel were also held in the East Java provincial capital of Surabaya by thousands of Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) sympathisers. The

protesters, the majority of which were housewives and children, marched to the Grahadi Building where they held a joint prayer.

Workers in Bandung demand payment of wages, subsidies

Around 1,000 current and retired employees from the company PT Kereta Api Java-Sumatra descended on the company's central offices in the West Java provincial capital of Bandung on August 7. The protesters were demanding that the management fulfil a promise to pay a 13th round of wages and provide subsidies to retired employees to pay for healthcare and buy rice. (Detik.com, 7/8/2006)

Police arrest dozens of anti-Israeli students in Bandung

A student demonstration against Israeli aggression in Palestine and Lebanon in Bandung on August 8 has ended in chaos. The protesters, who had forced their way into the offices of the West Java governor in the Gedung Sate Building, became angry when police tried to prevent them from taking down a flag. Fifteen protesters were arrested in the incident.

From the start, the action by the 30 or so students from the Islamic Student Association (HMI) was quite heated. They gave speeches and put up posters and banners condemning the barbarism of the Zionist state as well as setting fire to old tyres in front of the Gedung Sate Building complex. (Liputan 6, 8/8/2006)

Former Bank Dagang Bali employees demand severance pay

A demonstration on August 8 by hundreds of former employees of Bank Dagang Bali who had gone to the Denpasar branch of Bank Indonesia was marred by an incident in which protesters and police pushed and shoved each other. The protesters were demanding the payment of severance pay that has now been outstanding for two years. A meeting between representatives of the protesters and Bank Indonesia was unable to reach an agreement and a second meeting is to be held tomorrow with the team overseeing the liquidation of Bank Dagang Bali. (Liputan 6, 8/8/2006)

Hundreds of farmers rock the State Palace

Hundreds of farmers from Way Kanan in Lampung, South Sumatra, held an action at the State Palace in Jakarta on August 9. They were calling on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to assist in resolving a land dispute with the company PT Bangun Nusa Indah Lampung (BNIL).

The farmers were demanding rights over land being used a subsidiary company of BNIL because to date they have not received any benefits from crops produced on the land even though the land belongs to them.

“Since 1996 they have been oppressed by unjust company policies. Their land was taken to plant palm oil trees and managed by the company. But up until now, they have not received any of the produce from their land. Instead they have had to bear a debt of 15 million rupiah to this day. They are not prepared to accept this”, said Sopian Sitepu who was representing the farmers. (Detik.com, 9/8/2006)

Former Bank Dagang Bali employees demonstrate again

Once again hundreds of former employees from Bank Dagang Bali have blockaded the entrance to the Denpasar branch of Bank Indonesia. The demonstration on August 9 was demanding that the team overseeing the liquidation of the bank disburse severance pay amounting to three months wages to the 685 former employees through Bank Indonesia. (Kompas Cyber Media, 9/8/2006)

Damri bus drivers threaten strike action

Hundreds of drivers from the Damri bus company demonstrated in front of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) building in Surabaya on August 9. They were demanding that minibuses from the nearby cities of Mojokerto and Malang not be allowed to operate within the city as it is cutting into their incomes.

The protesters said that if the Surabaya municipal government did not heed their demands they would go on strike saying that this would leave thousands of passengers stranded. The government’s failure to heed a similar threat in March resulted in hundreds of Damri bus drivers taking strike action. (Liputan 6, 9/8/2006)

Fisherpeople demonstrate against trawling boats

Around 1,000 fisherpeople demonstrated at the Sibolga DPRD in North Sumatra on August 8. They were demanding that the Sibolga municipal government and the Tapanuli Tengah regional government prohibit boats using large trawling nets from operating in the Sibolga and Nias waters. The protesters said that the operations of these boats had resulted in a decline in their catch over the last five years. The demonstration almost ended in a clash when police tried to stop the fisherpeople from giving speeches. (Liputan 6, 9/8/2006)

Transport drivers protest infringement of designated routs

Hundreds of public transport drivers on the Banyumanik-Pasar Johar route in the Central Java provincial capital of Semarang demonstrated at the city hall on August 9. They were demanding the removal of city busses that they said are infringing on their designated route which has resulted in a decline in their income. Responding to their demands, the Semarang public relations office promised to follow up their complaints. (Liputan 6, 9/8/2006)

Makassar workers strike, company paralyzed

Dozens of workers from the company PT Barawaja in the South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar went on strike on August 9 following the dismissal of one of their colleagues. The workers said the dismissal was unfair as the person concerned was a diligent worker. They threatened to continue the strike that has paralyzed the company until the PT Barawaja management rehire their colleague. (Liputan 6, 9/8/2006)

Cimahi workers demand payment of outstanding wages

Dozens of workers from the company PT Korin held a demonstration at the Cimahi mayor's office in West Java on August 9. The action was held to protest the company's failure to pay their wages over the last two months. The demonstration, which had earlier been held at the PT Korin factory, got no response from the mayor's offices and a unit of local civilian police prohibited them from entering the offices. (Liputan 6, 9/8/2006)