

Impunity

Rights body calls for revision of history textbooks

The Jakarta Post, 31-03-2016

The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has called on the government to revise school history books, which it believes have been manipulated for decades by those in power. “We can’t depend on the version of history that was provided by the New Order government [from 1966 to 1998], for example. There should be new lesson materials based on the process of revealing the truth,” said Komnas HAM commissioner Dianto Bachriadi. History textbooks should be revised after the government reveals the truth regarding past human rights cases, he added.

Komnas HAM has launched its own investigations into the cases but its recommendations have never been followed up by the Attorney General’s Office. Dianto said the government should provide updated materials for history lessons in schools countrywide and compensate victims of past rights abuses.

However, Benny Susetyo of the Setara Institute said the most important thing in resolving past human rights cases was recognition and, therefore, the government should recognize the country’s dark past in order to bring about justice for victims. “Our society discourages efforts to recognize the truth of the past as it would threaten perpetrators’ positions nowadays,” said Benny.

The government has expressed its wish to resolve seven past human rights violations, namely a 1989 massacre in Talangsari, Lampung; the forced disappearance of anti-Soeharto activists in 1997 and 1998; the 1998 Trisakti University shootings; the Semanggi I and Semanggi II student shootings in 1998 and 1999; the mysterious killings of alleged criminals in the 1980s; the communist purge of 1965; and various abuses that took place in Wasior and Wamena, Papua, in 2001 and 2003.

Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Luhut Pandjaitan said on March 17 that the government expected to resolve at least six of those cases by May 2.

Resolving past rights cases within a year impossible: Komnas HAM

The Jakarta Post, 01-04-2016

The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) has voiced pessimism that the government will be able to solve six past human rights abuse cases within a year because the work would include revealing the truth as well as reconciliation. “It would be impossible to resolve all six cases within just one, two or even three years,” Komnas HAM commissioner Dianto Bachriadi said, adding that revealing the truth required time and should include reconciliation. Revealing the truth should be facilitated by the state, he added.



A nun looks at photographs of victims of past human rights abuses in front of the State Palace on Thursday during a weekly rally that is locally known as Kamisan. Thursday’s rally was the 417th since 2007, demanding that the government resolve the cases.(JP/Seto Wardhana)

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Dianto was commenting on a statement by Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Luhut Pandjaitan, who said the government would solve six human rights abuse cases, namely those on the 1965 communist purge; the 1989 Talangsari, Lampung, massacre; the Trisakti, Semanggi I and II shootings; and the 1998 disappearance of prodemocracy activists.

He questioned whether the government could resolve pass human rights cases and provide justice to the victims of rights abuses in such a short time. Problems faced by government include a lack of legal basis on the non-judicial mechanism, he added.

“The only non-judicial mechanism mandated by law is reconciliation through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [KKR] as stipulated in the Human Rights Trials Law. But the Constitutional Court has repealed the law,” said Dianto.

The rights body questioned the ability of the government to check data and facts from hundreds of thousands of victims across the country in such a limited time.

On top of that, people alleged to be involved in past human rights are still running the country, said Dianto. “They could be a hindrance to revealing the truth,” he said.

Freedom of Expression

KPI proposes censorship of TV programs

The Jakarta Post, 30-03-2016

In light of numerous warning letters sent to national television stations, which it says have fallen on deaf ears, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) has requested that the House of Representatives amend the Broadcasting Law to give the body authority to closely monitor TV programs.

KPI commissioner Amiruddin said the KPI wanted the authority to oversee the content of all television programs, including the power to censor content before it was aired. “House Commission I has given us the space to provide input to them regarding KPI’s authority. What we have proposed has been received and is now being discussed,” Amiruddin said, adding that the House of Representatives was enthusiastic about strengthening the KPI.

“With the authority to supervise the content of programs, KPI will be able to monitor programs before they are aired to prevent any inappropriate content,” he said after a public discussion on television broadcasting on Tuesday.

Under the current Broadcasting Law, the KPI does not have the authority to monitor television programs before they are aired.

Asked about supervision for live TV programs, Amiruddin said the mechanism would be different from pre-recorded ones. “For live programs, we will see their Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs), what the programs are going to talk about and their duration,” Amiruddin told The Jakarta Post.

Asked about the KPI’s proposal, Head of Corporate Secretary of RCTI, a private TV station, Tony Andrianto, said he would wait for the results of bill deliberations.

“If there is no opposition to the passage of the broadcasting bill in the future, we will comply with it. But, I believe there will be opposition from people working in [television] production that could prevent the bill from being passed into law,” Tony said. He added that the existing Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Broadcasting Program Standards provided sufficient guidelines for broadcasters.

Executive Producer of ANTV, Hannibal Wijayanto, said KPI’s warning letter had not been ignored by TV stations. “We do quality control before we broadcast programs. KPI should just oversee what we have aired and then issue a warning letter [if the content is not appropriate]. That is frightening enough for us,” Hannibal said.

He added that rather than censoring inappropriate programs before they were aired, the KPI should only impose sanctions on broadcasters after programs were broadcast. Metro TV chief editor Putra Nababan shared a similar opinion. “We are responsible for our programs. We will not run anywhere if KPI wants to evaluate us,” said Putra, adding that the bill should not limit the creativity of TV stations. (wnd)

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Environmental Rights

Govt Threatens to Deport Leonardo DiCaprio Over Mount Leuser Visit

The Jakarta Globe, 01-04-2016

Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio made a secret visit to Mount Leuser National Park in southeast Aceh on Sunday (27/3). Along with fellow actors Adrien Brody and Fisher Stevens, the budding environmental activist visited the park's research facility in Ketambe, where the trio had close encounters with Sumatran orangutans and elephants.

DiCaprio has taken a personal interest in conserving the forests of the Bukit Tiga Puluh National Park through his Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. The national park faces constant threats from deforestation, mainly driven by palm oil field expansion.

"We need local, national and international involvement to protect Mount Leuser National Park. The park is one of the oldest national parks in Indonesia and was declared a Biosphere Reserve by Unesco in 1981," said Andi Basrul, who runs Mount Leuser National Park.

The national park is also Unesco World Heritage Site and a natural habitat for some critically endangered species, including the Sumatran orangutans, Sumatran tigers, Sumatran elephants and Sumatran rhinoceros.

DiCaprio recently spread the message through his Twitter account, urging participation to boost the conservation efforts. The immigration service has threatened on Thursday (31/03) to deport Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio over his visit to the Mount Leuser National Park in Aceh during the weekend.

The actor and activist is accused of running a so-called "black campaign" against palm oil plantations in Aceh in an effort to discredit the Indonesian government and the country's palm oil industry, according to immigration service director general Ronny F. Sompi.

"If there are statements that discredit the government and the interests of Indonesia, he could be deported," warned Ronny, whose department is closely monitoring DiCaprio's activities in Indonesia.

Immigration authorities could deport the Oscar winner and his team, who are in the country on tourist visas, if they violate the terms of their visas, Ronny added.

"If [DiCaprio] is in Indonesia for other purposes, such as creating a public disturbance and harming the state's interests, immigration is ready to deport him," Ronny said.

This move was supported by Firman Subagyo, a member of the energy commission in the House of Representatives. The Golkar Party politician said he believes the actor's visit was facilitated by nongovernmental organizations wearing "environmental masks," that have been working to discredit the Indonesian government.

However, online environmental news portal EcoWatch confirmed with DiCaprio's team that the actor and his entourage have already left Indonesia on Thursday.

Leonardo DiCaprio is not the first Hollywood actor who faced deportation threats by the government for environmental activism. Actor Harrison Ford faced the same threat in 2013, after conducting a hard-hitting interview with the Indonesian forestry minister, urging him to take action against illegal logging in Sumatra.

Social and Economic Rights

Food shortage in NTT

The Jakarta Post, 04-04-2016

Two regencies in East Nusa Tenggara, namely Nagekeo and Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS), are suffering from prolonged drought and food shortages. It is estimated some 39 villages in these regencies require humanitarian assistance and long-term aid.

Humanitarian organization Plan International Indonesia said recently that from the end of March, it had dispatched an emergency response team to the 39 villages.

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“The emergency response team has distributed clean water in the Nagekeo and TTS regencies to reduce the impact of a long dry spell resulting from El Niño, which will affect East Nusa Tenggara until 2016,” the organization’s country director Myrna Remata Evora told journalists in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, on Saturday.

Myrna said the prolonged drought had reduced the quality of life in Nagekeo and TTS. Several villages in the two regencies are experiencing a clean water crisis alongside harvest failure and food scarcity. The dispatch of the emergency response team is aimed at reducing El Niño’s impact on the province, she said.

“The emergency response team will distribute clean water to villages in Nagekeo and TTS. Every village will get 5,000 liters of water every day for the next 30 days. This emergency work is supported by Start Fund, a multi-donor fund,” said Myrna.

Plan International Indonesia’s disaster mitigation program advisor Wahyu Kuncoro said that the amount of clean water available for people in the 39 villages was not enough. This is because the water distributed is usually prioritized as drinking water, and not allocated for domestic household needs, he added.

Wahyu further explained that as a humanitarian organization focused on fulfilling the rights of children, Plan International Indonesia wanted to ensure that children in the villages could easily obtain clean water. “The health of children is our priority. We have coordinated with all village-level administrations and local volunteers to prioritize children in the water distribution scheme,” he said.

Wahyu said the water would be distributed using trucks deployed to the villages. Beforehand, every village would be equipped with two fiber-made water tanks with a capacity of 2,200 liters each.

In the next 30 days, the clean water will reach more than 26,000 people in Nagekeo and TTS, around 15,000 of whom are children, Wahyu said.

After monitoring the region, Yahya Ado, the organization’s program manager in Nagekeo, said two districts in Nagekeo, namely Aesesa and South Aesesa, had suffered the most from the long dry spell. Both districts have experienced severe harvest failure.

“Our results are supported by data from the Nagekeo Disaster Mitigation Agency [BPBD], which shows that three villages in Aesesa district have suffered 100 percent harvest failures. Meanwhile, damage to land in two villages in South Aesesa district has reached 50 percent,” said Yahya. (ebf)

Bali fishermen rally against Susi’s policies

The Jakarta Post, 04-04-2016

Hundreds of fishermen rallied outside the Bali Legislative Council building on Monday to protest a government moratorium on fishing that they claimed negatively impacted their livelihoods.

They headed to the compound carrying posters reading "President Jokowi, please stop Minister Susi's image building", "Return the sovereignty of traditional fishermen" and "Bali fishermen reject ministerial regulation", among other messages.

They opposed a 2015 ministerial regulation on catching lobsters and crabs and a 2014 ministerial regulation on a moratorium on issuing fishing licenses.

"Because of this, our catches have dropped significantly and many fishermen are now unemployed. In the past, we could send our kids to school, but now it's difficult just to buy food to feed them," said Bali Fishermen Association coordinator Ketut Aryana Yasa as quoted by tempo.co.

The protesters called on President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo to pay attention to the matter, underlining that almost every fisherman supported him in the presidential election. They also urged the President to dismiss Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti.

"Please, Mr. Jokowi, if the ministerial regulation is not repealed, just replace Minister Susi," Aryana added.

He also expressed hope that the Bali Legislative Council would convey the fishermen's concerns to the central government. They have vowed not to conduct anarchic acts as long as their grievances were addressed.

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Political developments

Economic cooperation modified

The Jakarta Post, 04-04-2016

President Jokowi unilaterally announced that the plan will be substantially modified to be an onshore liquefied natural gas (OLNG) plant, in contrast to the prior development plan submitted by contractors Inpex and Royal Dutch Shell. Originally, the project was planned to be equipped with a state-of-the-art floating liquefied natural gas (FLNG) facility.

Read the full story:

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2016/04/04/observing-the-masela-case-through-a-historical-lens.html>

Papua

Solomon Islands speaks at UN Human Rights Council on West Papua

The United Nations' Human Rights Council in Geneva held its 31st regular session from the 29th of February to the 24th of March 2016. On March 15th 2016 Solomon Islands raised concern on the ongoing human rights violations in West Papua during the council's session. The representative of the Solomon Islands particularly referred to frequently reported cases of arbitrary arrests, summary executions, tortures, ill treatment and limitations of freedom of expression committed by Indonesian security forces. Minister Counsellor and Chargé d'Affaires of the Solomon Islands Mission to the United Nations and the WTO in Geneva, Barrett Salato told the Council on Monday, that human rights violations in that region needs urgent attention by the world community. Salato also highlighted the high number of maternal mortality of 500 per 100'000 stressing that access to education and health services for the Papuans has deteriorated.

Read the full statements: <http://humanrightspapua.org/news/181-solomon-islands-statement-in-human-rights-situation-in-west-papua-during-31st-session-of-the-human-rights-council-in-geneva>