

# **Indonesia: 'I can be jailed but the truth of business-military links in Papua cannot': Activist**

Saturday 2 July 2022, by [CHATERINE Rahel Narda](#) (Date first published: 19 March 2022).

**Jakarta — Activist Haris Azhar has spoken out about the decision by police to declare him a suspect on charges of alleged defamation against Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan.**

Azhar says that he can indeed be physically imprisoned, but the truth of what he said on the economic and political facts behind the military deployments in Intan Jaya, Papua, is the truth.

Aside from Azhar, who is the executive director of the Lokataru Foundation, Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) Coordinator Fatia Maulidiyanti has also been declared a suspect in the same case.

"My body, physically I, and I'm also sure Sister Fatia, we can be imprisoned. But the truth which we spoke about in the video on YouTube cannot be imprisoned," said Azhar during a press conference on Saturday March 19.

"The suffering of the Papuan people cannot be silenced or put in prison. The suffering of the Papuan people, particularly those in Intan Jaya, they will continue to cry out seeking help," he said.

Azhar also believes that his declaration as a suspect is a form of respect.

Moreover Azhar is of the view that his declaration as a suspect is a facility which has been given to him by the state because he has revealed a fact.

"I believe that this is a form of respect for me, I believe that it is a facility that the state has given to me when we speak out or assist in uncovering a fact," he asserted.

According to Azhar, the facts which he is referring to are the facts related to the existence of a conflict of interest in Intan Jaya. The parties which are often involved in conflicts of this kind, according to Azhar, are people who hold dual positions, namely as businesspeople and at the same time public officials.

Information on Haris Azhar and Fatia Maulidiyanti being declared suspects has been confirmed by Metro Jaya regional police public relations division head Senior Commissioner Endra Zulpan.

"Yes, both of them (Azhar and Maulidiyanti) have been declared suspects," said Zulpan when sought for confirmation on Saturday.

The case began with a discussion between Azhar and Maulidiyanti which was broadcast on YouTube in which they highlighted the results of an investigation by several non-government institutions on

Pandjaitan's alleged involvement in mining businesses in Intan Jaya.

The subject of the discussion between Azhar and Maulidiyanti was based on the results of a report by the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) National Executive, the People's Earth Heritage Foundation (Pusaka), Walhi Papua, the Papua Legal Aid Foundation (LBH), the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras), the Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam), Greenpeace Indonesia and Trend Asia titled "The Political Economy of the Placement of the Military in Papua: The Intan Jaya Case".

Quoting from the Kontras.org website, the study shows the relationship between mining company concessions with the placement and deployment of the military in Papua by examining one case in the Intan Jaya regency.

In the report, there were four such companies in Intan Jaya which were identified, namely PT Freeport Indonesia (mining), PT Madinah Qurrata'Ain (mining), PT Nusapati Satria (mining) and PT Kotabara Miratama (mining).

Two of these four companies, namely PT Freeport Indonesia (PTFI) and PT Madinah Qurrata'Ain (PTMQ) are gold mining concessions which were identified as having a relationship with the military or police.

Previously, Panjaitan denied accusations that he was criminalising Azhar and Maulidiyanti. The accusation was made by one of the members of Maulidiyanti's team of lawyers, Julis Ibrani.

"There's nothing of the kind here. I've never had time to think like that, I've already got lots of work," said Panjaitan at the Metro Jaya police on Wednesday September 22, 2021.

Panjaitan reported Azhar and Maulidiyanti because he believes that their statements were irresponsible. The former Coordinating Minister for Security, Politics and Legal Affairs even claimed to have asked Azhar and Maulidiyanti for the evidence resulting from the research.

"I'm entitled to defend my rights. I've already asked for the evidence (from Azhar and Maulidiyanti) but it doesn't exist. They said the research, doesn't exist," said Pandjaitan.

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