

Indonesia: Government asked not to show favouritism towards big polluting companies

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Jakarta — The Jakarta Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) is urging central and regional governments not to show favouritism in acting against business owners that contribute to air pollution.

Walhi Jakarta campaigner Muhammad Aminullah said that the government must be transparent and reveal data on the big polluting companies, not just act against small businesses.

“But the transparency must be clear. Don’t play favourites. It shouldn’t just be small and community businesses that are targeted”, Aminullah told CNN Indonesia on Thursday August 31.

The man who is often called Anca said that Walhi Jakarta has conducted a study on the supervision of business operators that disobey the regulations. He said that there is a gap between the business entities that have obtained environmental permits and the number that have been checked.

Aminullah said that the study referenced Jakarta provincial Environmental Office (DLH) data. He revealed that between 2018 and 2021, the Jakarta regional government has issued as many as 5,038 environmental permits. However, he said, only 3,300 business operators have been checked.

“That isn’t proportional. The permits applications that come in over a year are in the thousands. If we look at manufacturing industries, there are 1,600, on average monitoring only reaches 848, meaning that half of the manufacturing industries haven’t been checked yet”, he explained.

Aminullah also revealed that between 2019 and 2021 there were around 2,600 environmental permit holders that were not in compliance with regulations. “The forms of non-compliance are varied, including those that significantly affect environmental change”, he said.

He is also urging the governments to be transparent and reveal the data on companies that are not environmentally compliant, and that all of the companies that are non-compliant must be acted against.

“Meaning there are many violations being committed by industries in Jakarta, but the government hasn’t revealed the data, what form [of non-compliance], how big the fine was, what kind of pollution, the government is not providing this”, he said.

“Yet this is important in efforts to combat air pollution, so it is dangerous if the public doesn’t know, this will endanger the public”, he added.

Earlier, the government handed down sanctions against 11 companies that were contributing to air pollution in Jakarta and surrounding areas.

Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya said that they have already deployed a team

consisting of 100 people and that 161 industries in six locations have been targeted by the ministry for inspections.

Nurbaya said that the sanctions handed down were in the form of administrative sections and the government is urging polluting companies to improve their waste management.

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