

Indonesia: Against the France based company: Student solidarity against PT. Weda Bay Nickel

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Statement by the Weda Local Mining Communities Concern Alliance (APMLT) - March 17, 2011

- Capitalism and the rotten political elite are the instigators of the people's poverty
- Dissolve the military guardians of capital
- Mining and natural resources for the people's welfare

Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution mandates that the country's natural wealth, mining, forestry products, plantations and agriculture, as well as the sea's riches throughout the territory of Indonesia be managed in the interests of the people's. The reality however is exactly the opposite. The capitalist economic system that is in effect in Indonesia ensures that the profits from the management of natural resources are the sole property of the capitalist class.

PT. Weda Bay Nickel is a mining company that for 17 years has managed a nickel mine in Weda, Central Halmahera regency, North Maluku province. Between 1993 and 2011, the French based company has employed thousands of mine workers as contract, permanent daily workers and daily casual workers.

Strangely, over these 17 years the company is still busily engaged in exploration, which should only be for a maximum of five years. The mining products, which are all exported overseas, are deemed as exploration samples (trial examples) and not the result of production or exploitation. As a consequence, each month workers are arbitrarily dismissed by the company without any clear grounds. Moreover local communities in the vicinity of the mine whose land is included in the mining area have still not been paid for their land by the company. It is even more ironic that neither the Central Halmahera regency government nor the North Maluku provincial government appears to care about what the nickel company does. Moreover the regional government has instead added to the people's suffering by setting the North Maluku minimum regional wage (UMP) for 2011 at 889,000 per month, well below the reasonable living cost index (KHL) for North Maluku workers.

This has culminated in condemnation by workers, students and local communities who have taken protest action against PT Weda Bay Nickel's arbitrary and repressive behaviour, which started in 2007. In February this year, there were more demonstrations by the Local Mining Communities Concern Alliance (APMLT) opposing and fight back against the company's arbitrary dismissals. This resistance by the people however has faced repression from the military (the Mobile Brigade and police), which are intentionally been deployed in mining areas to safeguard companies. To date, nine former workers who were dismissed by the company have been arrested, have suffered physical abuses, and have yet to be released. Unfortunately, neither the local or national media has publicised the problem.

Based on this, we make the following calls:

1. Reject and fight capitalism, resource extraction companies that exploit the country's natural resources and the people must leave Indonesian soil;
2. Close PT Weda Bay Nickel because it brings no prosperity to the people and prohibits workers from building trade unions;
3. The government and the rotten political elite, who are the lackeys of capitalism, must take responsibility for the welfare of people's mining;
4. Reject the North Maluku 2011 regional minim wage of only 889,000 per month, a decent wage or death;
5. Expel and dissolve the military guardians of capital, the source of repression that abuses and intimidates the people;
6. Release the people who have been arrested (former workers, local residents and student) who have been the victims of physical abuse;
7. Fight and close the bourgeois media that fails to side with the people;
8. Build unity that is strong and independent for the struggle of the workers and the poor, fight capitalism, the government, the rotten political elite and the military that oppress the people and bring them no prosperity.

Let us unite, workers, farmers, the urban poor, fisherpeople and the women of Indonesia. Build organisations and unite the struggle for national liberation.

Weda Local Mining Communities Concern Alliance (APMLT), Central Halmahera

Comrade Alan.

Photographs solidarity action in front of PT. Weda representative in Jakarta. See:

<http://kprm-prd-english.blogspot.com/2011/04/against-france-based-company-student.html>

P.S.

* From KPRM-PRD English blog:

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