

Actions, demos, protests...

Indonesia Roundup #21 - June 26-July 2, 2006

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Farmers in Samarinda demand compensation

Dozens of people from a farmers group in the East Kalimantan city of Samarinda held a demonstration at the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) a short time ago. The demonstrators — most of whom were war veterans — were demanding compensation for land taken over by the mining company PT Lana Harita Indonesia.

The veterans arrived with number of goats. One of the former fighters even slashed their wrist to demonstrate their determination to obtain justice. (Liputan 6, 27/6/2006)

Papuans demand trial be moved to Timika

Around 600 residents from the West Papua town of Timika demonstrated at the offices of the state prosecutor and the Timika District Court on June 26. They were demanding that the trial of three defendants charged with the killing of three PT Freeport Indonesia employees in 2002 be held in Timika.

This demand was conveyed directly by Ruth Onawame the wife of one of the suspects, Reverend Ishak Onawame, to the head of the Timika state prosecutor's office and the head of the Timika District Court.

The protest proceeded in an orderly fashion with demonstrators running in circles in accordance with the customs of an Amungme tribal war. The tears and crying of the wives of the defendants added to the emotions of the rally when one of the Amungme women read out a poem titled Justice. (Liputan 6, 27/6/2006)

Police arrest eight in anti-Suharto demonstration

On the grounds that they had no permit, police arrested eight students from the United Peoples Alliance for the Trial of Suharto (ARBAS) on June 28.

The action involving some 50 students was held in front of the Bina Sarana Informatika campus in Salemba, Central Jakarta. While protesters were absorbed in giving speeches, dozens of officers from the Central Jakarta district police forcibly broke up the action and arrested the eight students.

"All of a sudden we were chased away by more than 50 local police. We will continue to hold actions until our demands are met. If not SBY-JK [President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono-Vice President Jusuf Kalla] must resign", said one of the protesters.

In addition to breaking up the demonstration, police also dismantled an ARBAS coordination post at the Christian University of Indonesia in Central Jakarta. (Detik.com, 28/6/2006)

Protests greet vice president's visit to North Sumatra

An official ceremony to mark the construction of the Kuala Namu International Airport by Vice President Jusuf Kalla in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra was marred by protests on June 29. Dozens of local residents arrived at the location demanding compensation for their land. Security personnel however prevented the protesters from getting near to Kalla's entourage. (Liputan 6, 30/6/2006)

Serang resident oppose sand mining

A short time ago, a group of students demonstrated at the Jalan Protokol roundabout in the city of Serang, Banten regency. They were demanding that the Serang regent, Taufik Nuriman, revoke licenses to mine sand on the beaches of North Serang.

The protesters said that the mining activities in the area were damaging the marine ecosystem. The action almost ended in chaos when students hijacked a number of official government vehicles that were passing by the demonstration. (Liputan 6, 30/6/2006)

Bandung students demand release of colleagues

Earlier this afternoon, the grounds of the Sate Building in the West Java regional capital of Bandung were overrun by a student protest. The students were demanding the release of six of their colleagues who were arrested at a demonstration yesterday. The students also demanded that former President Suharto and his cronies be tried immediately and called on the government to respect the people's rights to the freedom of expression. (Liputan 6, 30/6/2006)

Simpang Tuan resident demand return of land

Hundreds of residents from three villages in the Simpang Tuan region protested at the East Tanjungjabung DPRD in Jambi regency on June 28. They were calling on the government and the regent of East Tanjungjabung to immediately return land seized by the company PT Bukit Barisan Indah Permai. The land, which has been the subject of a dispute for the last 10 years, has already been turned into a palm oil plantation.

A number of representatives of the protesters were received by members of the DPRD along with the regional secretary of East Tanjungjabung, Syarifudin Fadil. After discussions the two parties agreed that the company's operating permit would be revoked if the land were not returned. (Liputan 6, 29/6/2006)

Former PT Dirgantara Indonesia workers demand severance pay

Hundreds of former PT Dirgantara Indonesia employees demonstrated at the Sate Building in Bandung on June 29. They were demanding support from assembly members to force the state owned company to immediately release 40 billion rupiah to cover the payment of pensions to some 3,500 dismissed employees. They also threatened to take their protest to the offices of PT Dirgantara if the funds are not released by June 30. (Liputan 6, 29/6/2006)

Group calls for corruption case to be investigated

Dozens of people from the Coalition for the Eradication of Corruption (KPK) in the Mamuju regency of West Sumatra protested at the offices of the Mamuju state prosecutor on June 29. The demonstrators were demanding an immediate investigation into a corruption case involving the 2004 regional budget valued at 12 billion rupiah.

They also called on the state prosecutor to detain all government officials that have been named suspects in corruption cases. (Liputan 6, 29/6/2006)

Women and urban poor groups protest in Jakarta

Around 1,000 people from the women's organisation Perempuan Mahardika and the Urban Poor People's Union (SRMK) demonstrated at the offices of the coordinating minister for people's welfare in Central Jakarta on June 29. They were calling on the government to provide for the people's basic needs.

The protesters began gathering at the National Museum at around 11am then marched to the ministry offices. The front rank of demonstrators was made up of housewives and children followed by young women and men. They brought a variety of posters and red flags and most wore red T-shirts. "Bring down prices, increase wages and give free education to the poor", they shouted repeatedly raising their fists in the air.

Upon arriving in front of the ministry building, the demonstrators were greeted by dozens of security personnel from the Central Jakarta district police. (Detik.com, 29/6/2006)

Urban poor, women's group pledges to form political party

Satisfied with the demonstration in front of the offices of the minister for people's welfare, some 1,000 people from Perempuan Mahardika, SRMK, the People's Democratic Party (PRD) and the Indonesian National Front for Labour Struggle (FNPBI) moved off to continue protesting at the State Palace.

Upon arriving at the State Palace, the protesters resumed giving speeches in which they said that the government of President Yudhoyono and Vice President Kalla had failed to bring prosperity to the people. They said therefore that they plan to form a political party called the National Liberation Party (PPN) in order to defend the interests of the poor.

"A party will be born that sides with the poor and will cancel the foreign debt and provide free education and healthcare to the ordinary people. We will win the 2009 general elections", said the head of the PPN preparatory committee on June 29.

As of 12.45pm the action was still continuing closely guarded by around 50 officers from the Central Jakarta district police. (Detik.com, 29/6/2006)

Protesters move off to city hall... followed by food vendors

After articulating their demands at the State Palace, protesters from the Perempuan Mahardhika Network and SRMK then marched to the Jakarta city hall. Seeing them leave, the food vendors quickly packed up and followed them to the next protest site.

Leaving at around 2.50pm, the protesters marched off with a vehicle carrying a sound system leading the rally. One of the speakers continued to shout and encourage the protesters. "Bring down prices, raise wages, free education", they said while directing the demonstrators towards the city hall.

Like the earlier demonstrations, the march also caused a traffic jam. In order to alleviate the congestion police finally ordered drivers to use the Busway corridor.

Uniquely, when the rally moved off to towards the city hall, they were followed by dozens of food vendors who walked in rows alongside the rally or behind the rear section of demonstrators. Meatball, tofu salad, bottled water and vegetable salad vendors, all went along. (Detik.com, 29/6/2006)

Earthquake victims vandalize local government offices

Hundreds of residents from three villages from the Berbah sub-district of Sleman, Yogyakarta, protested at the Berbah government offices on June 30 demanding the distribution of support allowances.

Around 300 people from the villages of Sendangtirto, Kalitirto and Telogotirto began arriving by truck at the Berbah sub-district offices at around 10am. The protesters were demanding to know why only some residents had received support whereas all of them have been registered as victims of the earthquake and were entitled to assistance.

The Berbah sub-district head, Bambang Condro, agreed to discuss the issue with the protesters. When they

asked Condro to explain the problem, he claimed that the data from the village administration had already been submitted to the regional administration so they should speak with the regent.

Dissatisfied with his response, a row broke out and a number of office windows were smashed and the tables chairs used for the meeting were overturned. The uproar only ended after two truckloads of police arrived. In the end it was agreed that a number of the protesters would go to the regency offices while the remainder would stay behind and wait.
(Detik.com, 30/6/2006)

Activists protest eviction of urban poor in Palembang

Dozens of people from the Poor Peoples Front Struggle Front (FPRM) protested at the offices of the Palembang municipal government in South Sumatra on June 30. They were protesting against the growing number of evictions being carried out against vagrants, street vendors, beggars and street children in Palembang and urged the government to revise the regulations on controlling the urban poor.

"The government should create employment opportunities in order to alleviate poverty instead of taking short cuts by removing the poor," said action coordinator Akbar Ikramsyah who is also a member of the National Mandate Party affiliated youth movement BMPAN.

The protesters also urged the government to organise labour intensive programs, provide healthcare subsidies and housing for the poor, including low-ranking civil servants. (Kompas Cyber Media, 30/6/2006)

Pekanbaru residents accuse KPU of emasculating their right to vote

Hundreds of residents in Pekanbaru demonstrated at the Riau DPRD in Sumatra on July 1. They were protesting the loss of their right to vote in the election of the Pekanbaru mayor on June 21. They accused the local National Election Commission (KPU) of emasculating their political right to vote for the mayoral candidates Herman Abdullah and Erizal Muluk. The protesters also called on the police to question members of the Pekanbaru KPU over

suspensions that they manipulated the number of registered voters. (Liputan 6, 1/7/2006)

Parents protest lack of transparency in school management

Dozens of parents of students at the Rawamangun state primary school in East Jakarta protested on June 30 against the lack of transparency in the management of the school's education funds. They said that as much as 2.8 billion rupiah had been misused.

The parents, who came from the Student Parents Communication Forum (FKOTS), marched to the school where they were greeted by the school principal Suparman. During discussion it was revealed that the school had never provided financial statements to the school committee whereas the use of operational funds must have the prior agreement of the committee. After a long debate, Suparman finally promised to take responsibility for the financial reports to the committee. (Liputan 6, 1/7/2006)

CV Sari Inti Pratama workers demand compensation

As many as 150 CV Sari Inti Pratama workers from the village of Sentul in the Sidoarjo regency of East Java, protested on July 1 urging the company management to immediately distribute aid money from PT Lapindo Brantas. PT Lapindo is providing 700,000 rupiah in assistance to each employee who is unable to work because their factory has been inundated by mud.

The majority of protesters, who were women employees, said they were only given two choices by their supervisor. If they accepted the 700,000 rupiah in compensation for lost wages they would be deemed to have resigned, or they would continue to be employed if they were willing to receive half the amount. Dewi, one of the protesters, said that they had the right to all of the compensation from PT Lapindo. (Liputan 6, 2/7/2006)