

Indonesia: 20,000 people from traditional communities to be evicted for new capital city

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Vitorio Mantalean, Jakarta — The Nusantara Traditional Community Alliance (AMAN) estimates that around 20,000 people from traditional communities will be sacrificed by the project to move the state capital (IKN) to East Kalimantan.

The 20,000 people are divided among 21 traditional groups or communities covering 19 groups in North Penajam Paser and two groups in Kutai Kartanegara.

AMAN management board Human Rights, Legal and Policy Advocacy Director Muhammad Arman believes that the IKN Law, which was enacted lighting fast by the House of Representatives (DPR) on January 18, will become a tool to legitimise land theft in the area and the ethnic cleansing of traditional communities there.

This is because under the new law, there are no clauses citing respect for or protection of traditional communities impacted upon by the new capital city project.

“There is in an explanatory article. But, the explanation isn’t legally binding, and the wording is limited to ‘concern for traditional communities’,” Arman told [Kompas.com](#) on Thursday January 20.

“There isn’t a strong spirit of protecting traditional communities related to their rights, particularly to land and traditional culture,” he added.

Data from the National Development Planning Board (Bappenas) predicates that around 1.5 million people will be forced to migrate in stages to the new capital city in East Kalimantan to support the new city’s activities.

Once again, this will further alienate traditional communities.

It is not yet certain that they will be able to complete economically with the new arrivals from Jakarta because their economy depends upon their traditional source of livelihood — forests, rice fields, gardens, rivers and the sea.

“Even before the IKN moves in there were many conflicts, for example over permits for forestry concessions, mining, and so forth. The (IKN) will certainly need a lot of land. If traditional communities lose their land, at the same time they lose their traditional source of employment. It will be the same as the traditional communities at the IKN’s location becoming slaves,” explained Arman.

“So, [we] can be sure that the seizure of traditional land will perhaps also see an increase in

criminalisation, because it is certain that communities will not [be willing to] let go of their land,” he said.

Arman says that AMAN has already held an audience with the DPR’s Draft IKN Law working committee and conveyed these problems to them.

The working committee is even said to have visited the location of the proposed new capital city to listen to the wishes of traditional communities.

The following is a list of traditional community groups which have been identified by AMAN whose land will be used for the new capital city.

North Penajam Paser

1. Muan Bulu Minung Village
2. Mentawir Village
3. Muan Village
4. Sepan Village
5. Jaa-Benua Toyau
6. Nikai
7. Sotek
8. Waru
9. Muan
10. Nenang
11. Maridan
12. Semoi
13. Sepaku
14. Batu Mountain
15. Tunan
16. Babulu
17. Lango Beach
18. Nipah-nipah
19. Penajam

Kutai Kartanegara

1. Kenyah
2. Dayak Benuaq Ohokng Sangokng

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