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SBY is not firm, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Lies to the Public

It is so unfortunate to have a President who is not firm and unable to take action towards his minister who continuously becomes the spoke person for foreign corporation. The minister is being negligent to his mandate and creates law chaos. That is the description of the gold mine case handling of Meares Sopotan Mining Company (MSM) and Tondano Nusa Jaya (TTN) Mine in North Sulawesi that are operated without any AMDAL (environmental impact analysis) and are refused by the surrounded people.

Two years ago, energy and mineral department insisted to issue a permit when MSM Company environmental impact analysis is stated as not adequate or expired by the Ministry of Environment (KLH) via the letter of B.6395/Dep.I/LH/12/2005. This has raised a legal and government chaos. The appeal from KLH and South Sulawesi's Governor to stop MSM's operation for temporary is neglected. The police doesn't even has the power to process the company, the people who are protesting is being criminalized and brought to court letting the company acts free.

And the President has let the minister breaking the Government Law no. 27 year 1999 chapter 24 about Amdal. The result is bad. A year after the construction permit was issued, mud flood has covered some villages surrounding the mining. "It is strongly assumed that the flood happened because of the destruction of landscape due to MSM company's construction that has no AMDAL," said Revoldi Koleangan from Ammalta or the community alliances against mining waste. Until today, the community continuously refuses that risky project.

Toka tindung forest, the area that is going to be extracted is a water catchments area for the villages underneath and supports the area of Tangkoko Dua Saudara National Park. It is only 4 km away from Rinondoran bay that gives live to thousand of people from its fishery and tourism. It is a sustainable sector compared to gold mine that will only last for 6 years.

And last Sunday, responding to Ammalta's protest and report to the President, Energy and Mineral Department insisted to state that his action is the most correct and according to the procedure. Even though the South Sulawesi governor doesn't want to legalize the company's Amdal. Environmental Ministerial Decree No.40 Year 2000 stated that the Amdal authority lies in the Governor. On April 8, 2008, the Environmental Minister also stated that they haven't issued Amdal's legalization. Not to mention that during the drafting of new Amdal, the representatives from the community around the mining area have come to Indonesian Legislatives (DPR) and have stated their refusal.

"From the handling of MSM company's case, it is seen how the minister of energy and mineral is not capable to deal with the mining sector. Every effort, including telling lies to the public are done, outlaw action is considered right for the sake of foreign investment's interest" said Berry N Furqo, WALHI Executive Director. The minister of energy and mineral, who is a public officer should have prioritized people's safety first instead of defending Archipelago, the Australian company in which the owner of MSM company that currently gain financial support from the UK, USA, Canada, France and German.

It's not only in this event that the minister of energy and mineral serves the foreign corporate that resulted mining cases remain unprocessed. It starts from Freeport Indonesia, the pollution of Buyat bay, divestment of Newmont Nusa Tenggara, Inco Company, Nusa Halmahera Mineral Company and others.

"President should not be a doubter, it is about the time to fire Purnomo Yusgiantoro, whose actions are damaging people's safety and making SBY performance looks bad in front of the people. It starts from mine cases that are not able to be processed, power supply crisis to the rise of fuel price," said Siti Maemunah, JATAM National Coordinator.
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