

Tug of War of Environmental Impact Analysis: Threatening Our Safety

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Information case sheet of PT MSM and PT TTN, April 1, 2008

Since 2001, we have rejected gold mining plan at Toka Tindung. We have had suffered losses although they haven't extracted yet. We were intimidated, beaten by hoodlums and the community is being opposed against another. We are always worried every day. It was added by mud flood due to the cutting down of trees on the top and our fishing results are decreasing drastically due to the construction of PT MSM's pier. (Tajjudin Hema, Kalinaon community's member)

In this country, people's voice is considered evil's voice. Though rejection has already been conveyed long ago by the people around mining site, the government just plays dumb. Even, although the two big scale gold mining companies haven't yet finished their Environmental Impact Analysis (AMDAL) documents starting from the end of 2005 till 2007, they were just being let go to do construction stage in Tokatindung's forest area. They are PT Meares Soputan Mining (MSM) and PT Tambang Tondano Nusajaya (TTN).

Without AMDAL, at the present, they have built three tailing dams for 10 million tons of tailing that will be produced during 5 years of operation. There are also plant's facilities and offices and piers. At the upper area, they cut and turn the flow of Budo river for their water sources.

And, on March 7, Energy and Mineral Resource Department- approved their works, by issuing a letter numbered 0998/40/MEM.G/2006.

Where are justice, protection and life assurance for people in Toka Tindung? Where is the Law No. 23 year 1997 on Environmental Management? Where is the Law No. 7 year 2004 on Water Resource? Where are the police that supposed to stop illegal operation of PT MSN and PT TTN? Where is the people representative?

The community has suffered many losses since the company came. The cutting down of trees in Toka Tindung mountain has resulted in the damage of hundreds hectares of water absorption areas. It has ugly consequences. On March 11, 2007, for the first time there was mud flood in the area. It flooded two villages on the belt of the mine site. Beside that, after mud flood, hundreds of fish died and cast ashore on Sampiran seashore, Rinondoran Gulf.

Erosion due to the cutting down of trees has heightened the sedimentation and the silting up of Araren river to the mouth of Rinondoran Gulf. Since then, Rinondoran Gulf has changed. Sea water that usually looks blue turns to fuzzy brown when rain comes.

The pier owned by the company is also causing problem. It was built and operated on August 2006 until mid 2007 without AMDAL and permit from Communication Minister as required by Governmental Regulation No. 69 year 2001 on Piers.

Rinondoran Gulf is the life artery for people in three villages near the gulf from Kalinaun, Rinondoran to Batuputih. It is as the main source income area. Coral reef along the gulf becomes the place where many fishes stop by and nest. Various kind of fishing tools are met alongside the gulf from bagan-a drifted house and raft on the sea, soma; a net fishing tool, karamba to a fishing rod-the smallest and man operated tool.

But since the pier was built and there was deposit of sediment on the river mouth, fishermen's income was decreasing much. One of the reasons is the location of the pier and its spot lights. Three giant spot lights are directed to sea, illuminating more than 500 meters of sea. This disrupts Bagan's fishing result. Fishes that usually gather around the kerosene pressure lantern were gone. Aside from it, the construction work makes the water's traffic hectic with PT MSM's cargo ships. This makes fishes stay away from it.

The aforementioned things make fishermen's income drop. Formerly fishermen could earn about Rp 1 million to Rp 2 million a month, but now they only get Rp 100.000 to Rp 200.000 a month. This makes them angry and upset.

Knowing that their protests to Communication Minister, local legislative council (DPRD), company and government were unheard, on November 12, 2006 they burned a wooden guard post owned by the company at Rinondoran coast. Strangely, this time the policemen were so quick. They interrogated 11 fishermen and environmentalists who were accused of violating penal law of destruction, and they were being processed to court. Finally, the Manado Court gave verdict that three of them were guilty and each one was imprisoned for one and a half year.

On February 2, 2007 North Sulawesi Governor decided to refuse the AMDAL of PT MSM and PT TTN with his letter numbered 660/209/Sekr. There are three reasons, which are: the mines are rejected by the people, the waste management technology hasn't yet proved to be able to protect the environment and people, and they are against the provincial spatial lay out.

Strangely, on November 15, 2007 the North Minahasa DPRD issued a decree numbered 20 year 2007 that they approved of PT MSM operations. The decree was only signed by Tomi Sagai, vice of DPRD, from Functionaries Group (Golkar) party.

There are many other losses experienced by the people since the mining came. Horizontal conflict is one of them. There are manipulations of company administrative prerequisite. Starting from the approval decree of North Minahasa's local legislative

council for the operation of PT MSM, the support from 8 village heads on the mining belt (some of them became contractors for the company), tens of land lawsuit at Manado Court due to eviction and enforced land conversion, manipulation of AMDAL documents completion from Unsrat academics, law discrimination to groups protesting PT MSM operation, ill treatment from company's hoodlums and so many more.

Since in the beginning, we have rejected the gold mine in Toka Tindung area. But the mining administration requirements- legal permit, recommendation and AMDAL- have become tools to separate us, drained our energy and threatened our safety.

We demand the government to stop the mining operation of PT MSM and PT TTN immediately.