

Jakarta, Monday June 12, 2017

Residents have been forced to leave Pari Island

PT Bumi Pari Asri claims to have right-to build certificates

Residents have no official certificates for their land

For tourists, pari Island is praised as one of the most beautiful destination in the thousand Island, Jakarta, with its white sand shores and pristine water that hardly hides the splendor of the seabed.

But for locals, the island that they have lived on for generations may soon be a part of their history as a company has been forcing them to leave their homes.

Claiming rights to 90 percent of the island, PT Bumi Pari Asri has demanded that residents leave immediately, saying that they are not authorized to live there.

The company is planning to manage tourism activities on the island, which is already a popular weekend getaway for those living in Jakarta as well as local and foreign visitors.

The residents have challenged the company's claims, saying they have been living on the island for decades and managing the beaches on their own.

They have built homestays and charged people for access to the beaches, but the fees have gone to maintaining facilities on the island, they say.

Edi Priadi, a resident who has lived on the island since 1999, was sentenced to four months in jail in suit based on a claim that he was illegally occupying one of its land plots.

The company then issued warnings to Edi's wife, Dian Astuti, ordering her to vacate their house.

"The warning ordered me to vacate the house or be imprisoned for four years," Dian said.

Other residents said they were now forced to pay rent to the company to be able to stay in their homes.

Apart from that, three fisherfolks are currently facing legal action for asking tourists to pay a Rp. 5.000 (37 US cents) per person entrance fee, a practice that residents have carried out for maintaining the island. The police have called the entrance fee an illegal levy.

Tigor Hutapea from The People's Coalition For Fisheries Justice (KIARA) and activist with the save pari island coalition said the coalition had assisted 314 families to report the land ownership dispute to the Ombudsman in March.

During hearings of the ongoing case at the ombudsman, it has been revealed that in 2014, the North Jakarta National Land Agency (BPN North Jakarta) issued 80 right-to build (HGB) and land ownership certificates to the company and some people who were not the residents of the island, without the residents' consent.

Tigor added that the coalition had reported the case to the office of the President's Staff (KSP) and asked it to order the Agriculture and spatial planning ministry to review whether the certificates were issued in accordance with the proper procedures.

Land disputes in thousand Island have frequently occurred as most of the residents across the

islands in the regency only hold *girik* (customary land appointments) certificates, Land and Building Tax (PBB) payment receipts, and a document regarding the sale and purchase of land (AJB) as evidence of land ownership.

On Pari Island, most of the resident only hold AJB and PBB receipts.

Thousand Island regent Budi Utomo refused to take sides in the case, saying that he is not in the position to decide on the legality of land ownership claims. But he promised that he would try to keep the residents safe. "In principle, we don't want the resident of Pari Island to be avicted,he said.

Budi also said the administration was set to issue 400 land certificates on other islands, to prevent similar cases.

Bumi pari asri spokesperson Endang Sofyan told news portal [kbr.id](http://kbr.id) that the company did not have land certificates on the island but had been awarded the HGB certificates by a consortium of land owners.

He said the consortium's purchases of land on the island occurred in the 1980s and now the company was only making use of the HGB licenses.

"[The land transaction] occurred many years ago. Now the residents have no evidence [of their ownership]."he said.

Sumber: The Jakarta Post, 12 Juni 2017.