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NTS VIEWPOINT

Fights over land rights in Indonesia

In recent weeks, Indonesia experienced a series of demonstrations over land rights in various parts of the country. While land rights controversies are not uncommon in Indonesia, the new wave of discontent has brought about high levels of tension – as well as instances of violence – between community groups and the authorities.

The protestors argue that the operations of natural resource companies – primarily those in mining and oil palm – have not only encroached onto their property but have also adversely affected the socioeconomic and environmental well-being of the surrounding areas. While the development of Indonesia's natural resources contributes to economic growth and development, it has ironically also been the source of growing domestic socioeconomic inequality. It is thus critical for the Indonesian government to effectively address local community needs to ensure political stability and long-term development.

The recent incidents reflect two of the main challenges that the processes of decentralisation and democratisation (since the fall of the Suharto regime in 1999) have brought about in Indonesia's management of natural resources. The first challenge relates to land rights arrangements, where there has been a lack of proper consultation with community stakeholders.

While the process of decentralisation in 2004 was meant to be a democratic measure to empower stakeholders at the local level, in practice it gave local government leaders the leeway to issue land leases to companies as they pleased, without consultation with local communities. Moreover, with increasing global demand for Indonesia's minerals and its fertile croplands, the tendency for some local leaders to cash in on the opportunities is even higher.

The inability of government authorities to manage community concerns is another challenge in the information age. Local communities are much more aware of their rights with the support and awareness-raising efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) nationwide. Moreover, authorities continue to adopt a heavy-handed, reactionary approach; when it would be more productive to delve further into the root causes of the problem. NGOs such as OpSawit have noted that instead of protecting local communities, the police and military have erected security posts at oil palm plantations, with few questions raised about the validity or legality of the companies involved. In addition, news of the government crackdown and arrests of protestors opposed to mining operations in West Nusa Tenggara had only served to trigger further violence, leading to the escape of activists from jail, as well as protests in other parts of Indonesia in a show of solidarity.

The recent incidents are also indicative of the implications that domestic unrest can have on the national economy. The mining conflicts in West Nusa Tenggara have compelled the national government to revoke the gold mining contract with the Australian-listed company Arc Exploration. While such a move may satisfy community groups in the short term, it can ultimately adversely affect investor confidence and Indonesia's ability to attract foreign investments. Striking a balance among these stakeholders is key, and can only come about with political will from government officials to keep the interests of communities at the core of their deliberations.

Contributed by Sofiah Jamil.

Additional Info:

- Sihite, Ezra and Bayu Marhaenjati, 'Land-rights protesters tear down parliament gates in Jakarta', *Jakarta Globe*, 12 January 2012.
- Pikong, Fitri and Antara, 'Bima district office torched by anti-mining mob', *Jakarta Globe*, 26 January 2012.
- 'Indonesia revokes gold mining permit amid violence', *Jakarta Globe*, 28 January 2012.
- Afrizal, Jon, 'In Jambi, most mining companies lack "clean" permits', *The Jakarta Post*, 1 February 2012.
- Fox, James J., Dedi Supriadi Adhuri and Ida Adju Pradnja Resosudarmo, 2005, 'Unfinished edifice or Pandora's box? Decentralization and resource management in Indonesia', in Resosudarmo, Budy P. (ed.), *The politics and economics of Indonesia's natural resources*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

- Resosudarmo, Budy P., Ida Aju Pradnja Resosudarmo, Wijayono Sarosa et al., 2009, 'Socioeconomic conflicts in Indonesia's mining industry', in Cronin, Richard and Amit Pandya (eds), *Exploiting natural resources: Growth, instability, and conflict in the Middle East and Asia*, Washington DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center.

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CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS



News & Commentaries

- 'Jon Barnett: Climate adaptation not just building infrastructure, but expanding options', video, *New Security Beat*, 6 January 2012.
- Bapna, Manish, 'Stories to watch in 2012: U.S., China, food, renewable energy, Rio+20', *WRI Insights*, 10 January 2012.
- 'Philippines: Flood-affected schools re-open, but challenges remain', *IRIN*, 10 January 2012.
- Buckley, Chris, 'China report spells out "grim" climate change risks', *Reuters*, 17 January 2012.
- Gonzalez, Roberto K., 'ICAO en-route to sustainability', *Climate Change Policy & Practice*, 17 January 2012.
- Harvey, Fiona, 'Conserving biodiversity hotspots "could bring world's poor \$500bn a year"', *Guardian*, 20 January 2012.
- Nath, Chandrika, 'How to tell policymakers about scientific uncertainty', *SciDev.Net*, 20 January 2012.
- Estopace, Dennis D., 'ASEAN execs: GDP must mirror biodiversity's worth', *Business Mirror*, 28 January 2012.

Selected Publications

- Steinberger, Julia K., J. Timmons Roberts, Glenn P. Peters et al., 2012, 'Pathways of human development and carbon emissions embodied in trade', *Nature Climate Change*, No. 2, pp. 81–5.

This article examines the relationship between human development and carbon changes when national emission rates for trade are adjusted. This study uses consumption-based measures of national carbon emissions based on the assumption that human development and economic growth are interlinked (economic growth requires greater energy use which leads to increased greenhouse gas emissions). The study provides interesting points for future deliberation on macro approaches to human development.

- Jamil, Sofiah, 2012, 'ENGOS' bitter pill: Adapting to incremental climate (governance) change', *NTS Alert*, January, Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies for NTS-Asia.

Environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGOS) have often been depicted as a section of civil society that is highly critical of the lack of political will in addressing environmental issues. This was again evident during the proceedings of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban in December 2011. This NTS Alert, however, discusses the limitations faced by ENGOS in influencing the UNFCCC process, as well as suggests options that ENGOS ought to consider in effecting change within and beyond the UNFCCC process.

- Mohammed, Essam Yassin, 2011, *Pro-poor benefit distribution in REDD+: Who gets what and why does it matter*, REDD Working Paper, London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

This paper examines the processes of operationalising Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation plus (REDD+) initiatives at the community or household level. It specifically examines the criteria and circumstances to be considered in the provision of benefits to various sections of the community and the form these benefits should take. Such issues would play an integral part in mainstreaming human security into climate change initiatives.

Events & Announcements

- '3rd Annual Green Buildings Asia 2012', 21–24 February 2012, Singapore.
- 'Call for Applications: Temasek Foundation Water Leadership Programme', 23 April – 4 May 2012, Singapore.
- 'Call for Abstracts: Barriers to Adaptation to Climate Change', 18–21 September 2012, Berlin, Germany.

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News & Commentaries



- Say, Mony, 'On Mekong Commission, a stark absence of two countries', *Voice of America*, 4 January 2012.
- Lamont, James, 'India seeks oil alternatives to Iran', *Financial Times*, 10 January 2012.
- Chew, Alvin, 'Malaysia-Singapore energy cooperation: Prospects and challenges', *RSIS Commentaries*, 10 January 2012.
- Jacobs, Andrew, 'Vote holds fate of nuclear power in Taiwan', *The New York Times*, 12 January 2012.
- Said, Summer, 'Saudi Arabia, China sign nuclear cooperation pact', *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 January 2012.
- Marks, Simon, 'Chinese dam project in Cambodia raises environmental concerns', *The New York Times*, 16 January 2012.
- Hu, Yinan, 'Proposal for global energy oversight', *China Daily*, 17 January 2012.
- Sharma, Tanmoy, 'Outrage over dams being built as part of India's hydro energy scheme', *Oil Price*, 24 January 2012.

Selected Publications

- Tharakan, Pradeep, Naeeda Crishna, Jane Romero et al., 2012, *Biofuels in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Energy sufficiency, food security, and environmental management*, ADB Southeast Asia Working Paper Series No. 8, Manila: Asian Development Bank (ADB).

There is an increasing need for alternative sources of energy in the Greater Mekong Subregion, and biofuels are widely regarded as a good option. The paper analyses the benefits and risks of promoting the utilisation of biofuels and argues that efforts should be made to alleviate the socio-environmental impacts of the expansion of biofuels, such as the competition for land between food crops and crops for biofuel generation.

- Sovacool, Benjamin K. and L.C. Bulan, 2011, 'Meeting Targets, Missing People: The Energy Security Implications of the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE)', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp.56–82.

This article assesses whether the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) in Malaysia contributes to ensuring energy security through four criteria, namely, availability, affordability, efficiency and stewardship of energy services for end users. It finds that SCORE only partially improves availability but fails to fulfil the other three criteria.

Events & Announcements

- 'Annual International Conference on Sustainable Energy and Environmental Sciences (SEES 2012)', 13–14 February 2012, Singapore.
- '2nd Annual District Energy Asia Summit', 13–14 February 2012, Beijing, China.

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FOOD AND HEALTH SECURITY

News & Commentaries



- 'Thais to pay more for rice in 2012; Exports predicted to plunge 30%', *Oryza*, 4 January 2012.
- 'Malnutrition data today, first in 5 years', *Indian Express*, 10 January 2012.
- 'FAO food price index ends year with sharp decline', Press Release, *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*, 12 January 2012.
- 'Vietnam's Mekong rice farmers struggle to sell low-quality rice', *Oryza*, 12 January 2012.
- 'Discovery of plant "nourishing gene" brings hope for increased crop seed yield and food security', *ScienceDaily*, 13 January 2012.
- 'Food security road map while adapting to climate change', *ScienceDaily*, 19 January 2012.
- 'Thought leaders at Davos discuss how to ensure food security', Press Release, *World Food Programme (WFP)*, 26 January 2012.
- 'UNICEF officials: Half a million children in Yemen are likely to die from malnutrition', *Yemen Observer*, 28 January 2012.

Selected Publications

- Headey, Derek, 2011, *Was the global food crisis really a crisis?*, Research Brief, Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

This brief challenges existing analyses of the poverty impact of the 2007–2008 food crisis. Simulation analyses, such as those undertaken by the World Bank and the UN, typically suggest that the rise in food prices during the period led to an increase in the number of poor and hungry of between 60 to 160 million people. This brief presents survey-based estimates from the Gallup World Poll which contradict these

figures.

- Masset, Edoardo, Lawrence Haddad, Alex Cornelius et al., 2011, *A systematic review of agricultural interventions that aim to improve nutritional status of children*, London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

This report finds that agricultural interventions in the form of programmes to enhance the diets and incomes of the rural poor in order to improve the nutritional status of children are somewhat effective. However, the evidence for the improvements in nutritional status is inconclusive, suggesting a greater need to integrate research from the agricultural and health sectors.

Events & Announcements

- 'Call for Nominations: World Food Prize', 1 May 2012, Des Moines, US.

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INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT

News & Commentaries

- Khouth, Sophak Chakrya, Kim Yuthana and Marry Kozlovski, 'Families trucked out', *The Phnom Penh Post*, 5 January 2012.
- 'Cambodia Khmer Rouge trial judges argue in public', *BBC*, 9 January 2012.
- Vong, Dara, 'ASEAN rights declaration moves closer to debate', *Voice of America*, 10 January 2012.
- 'Pakistan: Displacement caused by conflict and natural disasters, achievements and challenges', *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*, 10 January 2012.
- 'Bangladesh "war crimes mastermind" Ghulam Azam arrested', *BBC*, 11 January 2012.
- 'Sri Lanka: Tamil refugees slowly return from India', *IRIN*, 11 January 2012.
- Mydans, Seth, 'Burmese government and ethnic rebel group sign cease-fire', *The New York Times*, 12 January 2012.
- Maulia, Erwida, 'Let "the ASEAN way" take reins in region's democratization', *The Jakarta Post*, 12 January 2012.
- Wong, Edward, 'An ethnic war is rekindled in Myanmar', *The New York Times*, 19 January 2012.



Selected Publications

- Bellamy, Alex J. and Paul D. Williams, 2011, 'The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the Responsibility to Protect', *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 4, pp.825–50.

This article examines the new politics of human protection in conflict situations by analysing the international response to crises in the Côte d'Ivoire and Libya. It notes the principal characteristics of this agenda as well as its unresolved challenges.

- *Armed non-state actors and the protection of internally displaced people*, 2011, Conference Report, Geneva Call and Internally Displacement Monitoring Centre, Geneva, 23–24 March.

This report summarises the main findings of the conference which was organised to promote the awareness and understanding of armed non-state actors' responsibility in the protection of internally displaced persons, an issue which has been under-examined.

Events & Announcements

- 'Restructuring Refuge and Settlement: Responding to the Global Dynamics of Displacement', 16–18 March 2012, Toronto, Canada.
- 'Humanity and Humanitarianism in Crisis: Asia Association for Global Studies (AAGS) 2012 Conference', 17–18 March 2012, Tokyo, Japan.

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TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

News & Commentaries

- Wassener, Bettina, 'As affluence spreads, so does the trade in endangered species', *The New York Times*, 1 January 2012.
- McCurry, Justin, 'Yakuza gangs face fight for survival as Japan cracks down on organised crime', *Guardian*, 5 January 2012.



- Greenfield, Beth, 'The world's friendliest countries', *Forbes*, 6 January 2012.
- Adelstein, Jake, 'Pushing the Yakuza underground may make Japan less peaceful', *Guardian*, 8 January 2012.
- Chan, Wayne, 'Human-smuggling ring leader suspect arrested', *Channel NewsAsia*, 14 January 2012.
- 'INTERPOL appoints executive director for new global complex in Singapore', Press Release, *INTERPOL*, 16 January 2012.
- 'SOPA bill shelved after global protests from Google, Wikipedia and others', *The Washington Post*, 21 January 2012.
- 'Arms, arms everywhere', *The Nation*, 23 January 2012.
- 'Saudi lifts ban on Pinoy maids, sets minimum salary of \$400/month', *GMA News*, 26 January 2012.

Selected Publications

- Felbab-Brown, Vanda, 2011, *The disappearing act: The illicit trade in wildlife in Asia*, Working Paper No. 6, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Southeast Asia is rapidly becoming one of the world's wildlife-trade hot spots despite the enormous threat this illicit activity poses to the area's biodiversity and species preservation. This paper observes that efforts to fight wildlife trafficking in Southeast Asia are undermined by weak government policies, limited enforcement and low penalties. As such, countries in the region should toughen their laws and strengthen their enforcement.

- Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011, *Inquiry into human trafficking in Scotland*, Scotland.

This report observed that in Scotland, the victims of human trafficking, including women forced into the sex industry or trapped as unpaid domestic servants, are being unfairly treated as criminals and illegal immigrants. As such, the report recommended that law enforcement agencies invest in greater research and training on trafficking and efforts to tackle trafficking within the business community and labour markets. It also suggests the introduction of a new trafficking act in Scotland.

- Kar, Dev, 2012, *Mexico: Illicit financial flows, macroeconomic imbalances, and the underground economy*, Washington, DC: Global Financial Integrity.

This report finds that Mexico lost a total of USD872 billion to illicit financial flows (or illegal capital flight) over a 41-year period from 1970 to 2010. These illicit financial flows were generally the product of corruption, bribery and kickbacks, criminal activities and efforts to shelter wealth from the country's tax authorities.

Events & Announcements

- '17th Annual International Money Laundering Conference', 19–21 March 2012, Florida, US.
- '15th Transnational Crime Conference', 14–16 June 2012, São Paulo, Brazil.

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About the Centre:

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies was inaugurated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan in May 2008. The Centre maintains research in the fields of Food Security, Climate Change, Energy Security, Health Security as well as Internal and Cross-Border Conflict. It produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The Centre also provides a platform for scholars and policymakers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region.

In 2009, the Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for the MacArthur Asia Security Initiative, to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific.

The Centre is also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia). More information on the Centre can be found at www.rsis.edu.sg/nts.