



Police form a blockade during the attempt to forcibly evict the communities in North Sumatra, June 2011 © Private

INDONESIA: ARBITRARY AND EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE AND FIREARMS IN NORTH SUMATRA

On 27 June 2011 security forces in North Sumatra province reportedly used arbitrary and excessive force and firearms in an attempt to forcibly evict a community in Langkat district.

At least 700 families from the villages of Barak Induk, Damar Hitam and Sei Minyak in the Besitang and Sei Lapan sub-districts have been involved in an ongoing land dispute with local government authorities who claim that their villages are located within the Leuser Mountain National Park (Taman Nasional Gunung Leuser, TNGL). Many of them had been displaced in 1999-2000, during the armed conflict in Aceh province, directly adjacent to North Sumatra province.

According to local sources, on the morning of 27 June 2011, at least 5,000 people from the three villages were invited to meet with officers from the TNGL and others to discuss the ongoing dispute. After waiting for more than three hours, villagers from Sei Minyak received news that their houses were being destroyed in an attempt to forcibly evict them from the land. According to the villagers, the eviction was led by a TNGL team, assisted by at least 1,000 other personnel, including officers from the North Sumatra Police Mobile Brigade Unit (Brimob); the Yonif-8 Marine Unit; the Raider 100 Army Unit; the Rapid Reaction Unit of the 0203 District Military Command (Kodim); about 100 hired individuals; and two elephants.

The Brimob officers fired tear gas at the protesters as they rushed to defend their homes and property. Some of the Brimob officers then opened fire on the crowd, using both live and rubber bullets, injuring at least nine people. Six other villagers were reportedly kicked and beaten by Brimob officers and officers from the TNGL. At least five houses were destroyed, leaving at least 15 people homeless.

To Amnesty International's knowledge there has been no investigation into the incident.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please write to the Indonesian authorities urging them to:

- Immediately initiate a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into reports of the arbitrary and excessive use of force and firearms against the villagers of Barak Induk, Damar Hitam and Sei Minyak and, where appropriate, take measures to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials and the victims receive reparations;
- Ensure that all police officials are familiar with the Regulation of the Chief of the National Police on the Use of Force in Police Action (No. 1/2009) and the Regulation on the Implementation of Human Rights Principles and Standards in the Discharge of Duties of the Indonesian National Police (No. 8/2009), and have the necessary knowledge and equipment to apply these principles in their daily work; and
- Conduct a thorough review of police tactics and use of weapons during public order policing, with a view to ensuring that they accord with international standards, in particular the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

Please send letters to:

Chief of Police for North Sumatra Province

Irjen Pol Wisjnu Amat Sastro
Polda Sumatra Utara
Jl. Putri Hijau 14
Medan, North Sumatra
Indonesia
Fax: +62 61 787 0351
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

Head of the Division on Professionalism and Security (Propam)

Irjen Pol Budi Gunawan
Kadiv Propam Mabes Polri
Jl. Trunojoyo No. 3
Jakarta Selatan
Indonesia
Fax: +62 21 7280 0947
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

National Police Commission (KOMPOLNAS)

Mr. Adnan Pandu Praja
Sekretaris Kopolnas
Jl. Trunjoyo No. 3 Kebayoran Baru
Jakarta 12110
Indonesia
Fax: +62 21 739 2317
Salutation: Dear Adnan Pandu Praja

Please send copies to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

