




The Government's Responsibility and Youth Role in Human Rights Violations (Study Case: Wadas Village)

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Abstract. The mining conflict in Wadas Village, Central Java, illustrates a complex human rights issue arising from conflicting interests between the government and the local community. The core problem is the lack of transparency in land acquisition and the andesite mining plan, which disregards community rights. This study aims to explore the government's responsibility in addressing human rights violations and the role of youth in defending land rights in Wadas. Using a qualitative approach and literature review, the findings reveal that the conflict involves violations of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights. The mining activities threaten natural resources and the environment in Wadas Village. Although tensions have eased, the government has not provided sufficient rehabilitation to affected residents, leaving their economic, social, and cultural rights unaddressed. This study highlights the governments failure to protect Wadas residents rights in line with human rights principles, underscoring the need for reforms in public participation and human rights protection. The youth play a crucial role in enforcing human rights in Indonesia, acting as a bridge between the community and the government and leading sustainable human rights advocacy.

Keywords: Human Rights, Youth Role, Mining, Wadas

1 Introduction

Humans as thinkers have recognized that everyone has the basic right to live freely and prosper. Jean Rousseau, believed that freedom allows people to fully develop their potential.[1] However, human existence is deeply tied to the social environment where one grows and interacts. Interaction between people is crucial for learning and sharing processes. Social interaction, from small groups to national community is essential for learning and sharing.[2]

Human rights (HR) are fundamental and belong to every person without exception. In Indonesia, HR is protected by Undang-Undang Dasar Tahun 1945, particularly in articles related to freedom of expression, the right to life, and the right to welfare. Indonesia has also ratified international agreements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). However, enforcing HR in Indonesia still faces significant

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challenges, especially in agrarian conflicts, land rights, and natural resource management.

Indonesia known for abundant natural resources, with an estimated economic value of Rp200,000 trillion. Despite this, actual revenue remains low, with only Rp74.44 trillion generated in 2022 from the oil, gas, and non-oil sectors.[3] Conflicts between communities and the government or companies over resource management are common. A recent and highly publicized example is the conflict in Wadas Village, Yogyakarta, where an ambitious project to build the Bener Dam required andesite stones from Wadas Village to meet water needs for Yogyakarta International Airport.[4]

The people of Wadas Village do not oppose the dam itself but reject the mining of andesite stones in their area. While the government believes this mining will bring benefits, residents fear it will damage 28 water springs, impacting their farms and livelihoods.[4] They are also concerned about environmental destruction, as the village is located in a landslide-prone area according to the Peraturan Daerah Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah Kabupaten Purworejo Tahun 2011-2031. The mining plan overlooks this, suggesting that the chosen location is inappropriate.[6]

The Wadas residents struggle began in 2013 and peaked in February 2022 when the issue gained national attention after clashes between residents and police. This resulted in the arrest of many villagers. The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) reported human rights violations during the clashes, including injuries and the confiscation of residents property by the authorities.[7]

According to Komnas HAM, on February 8, 2022, the Central Java Regional Police used excessive force during land measurements in Wadas Village. Komnas HAM also documented police violence during the arrest of several villagers. As a result, the Central Java Regional Police were urged to evaluate the incident and punish the violators. Several residents sustained injuries to their foreheads, knees, and calves, and suffered pain in various parts of their bodies.[8]

Youth, as agents of change, play a strategic role in human rights advocacy, both through direct action and in shaping public opinion. With access to information and technology, youth have greater opportunities to lead more effective human rights campaigns.

Wadas case reveals the governments failure to address community concerns, leading to conflict and human rights violations during the land measurements for the andesite mining site. The conflict in Wadas Village has attracted attention from the media and communities beyond the area.[9] Thus, this study aims to explore the governments responsibility in the human rights violations in Wadas Village and the role of youth in advocating for the community land rights.

2 Research Method

The research used a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, meaning that the researcher interprets the phenomena

that occur by using various relevant methods. This study also aims to provide a description and narrative of the events being researched.[10] Qualitative research seeks to understand human or social phenomena by presenting a comprehensive description in narrative form or words.[11]

A literature review is a data collection technique aimed at understanding theories related to the research topic from various sources, such as journals, books, and credible news.[12] Therefore, this research will use various literature sources relevant to the theme of human rights violations and community involvement in Wadas Village.

3 Discussion

Human Rights Violations in Wadas Conflict

Indonesia has embraced human rights as a fundamental part of the states foundation. Articles 28A to 28J of UUD 1945 affirm basic rights such as the right to life, freedom of thought and expression, legal protection, and the right to education. In addition, Undang-Undang Nomor 39 Tahun 1999 tentang Hak Asasi Manusia, which reinforces the states commitment to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights.

Wadas Village, located in Bener Subdistrict, Purworejo Regency, Central Java, serves as example of human rights violations in agrarian conflicts in Indonesia. The conflict began when the government planned to mine andesite rock in the village to support the construction of the Bener Dam, a national strategic project. The local community opposed the mining due to concerns about environmental damage, threats to water sources, and the destruction of agricultural land, which is their main livelihood.

The human rights violations in this conflict unfolded in several stages. Initially, the governments plan to mine andesite in Wadas Village without involving the villagers, who feared the loss of their livelihoods. This led to violations of economic and political rights, as the community was not included in the decision-making process. The public participation process, such as Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan (AMDAL), was not effective, leaving residents not well-informed.

In 2022, the conflict reached its peak with a security crackdown on Wadas Village residents. The states heavy-handed approach worsened the psychological condition of the community, with deep trauma affecting Wadas peoples. The government failed to fulfill its responsibility to rehabilitate and heal the affected villagers. Human rights violations, particularly in terms of economic, social, and cultural rights, were evident as the mining project threatened natural resources like the villages water springs and farmland.

On February 8, 2022, 67 residents, including women and children, were arrested without clear legal grounds, though most were released following public pressure. Besides the arrests, several residents suffered physical injuries while defending their land, as they faced repressive actions from the authorities, although the exact number of injured individuals was not disclosed. This violence included beatings and shoving, causing both physical and mental trauma. Many villagers, especially women and children, were left psychologically scarred by the presence of armed security personnel

in their village. The conflict also resulted in economic and social losses for the residents, who lost access to their land and livelihoods, mostly tied to agriculture.[13]

This conflict highlights the governments failure to protect the rights of Wadas Village residents in accordance with human rights principles. Resolving the conflict requires reforms, particularly in terms of public participation and respect for human rights, to ensure justice and fully restore the villagers rights. The conflict reveals violations of civil, political, economic, and social rights, as the state failed to protect the residents dependence on the preservation of their land and village environment. Even after the conflict subsided, challenges remain in restoring the rights of the residents. Economic and social rights have yet to be fully addressed, and those who lost their livelihoods have not received equal compensation.

Potential Human Rights Violators in Wadas Conflict

The mining conflict in Wadas Village involves various actors who have the potential to violate human rights, starting with Kementerian Energi dan Sumber Daya Mineral (ESDM). As the entity responsible for the mining project, the ESDM Ministry is accused of misinterpreting the Public Interest Development Law. The andesite rock mining project in Wadas is not typical public infrastructure like highways or dams but rather a mining project that directly affects the environment and local livelihoods. Kementerian Pekerjaan Umum dan Perumahan Rakyat (PUPR), particularly through Badan Wilayah Sungai Serayu Opak (BWSSO), was involved in this project. Its role was to ensure that the national strategic project did not harm the local community. However, human rights violations still occurred. This ministry was responsible for overseeing the project to ensure compliance with human rights principles, but its failure in oversight contributed to the violations against the people.

Badan Pertanahan Nasional (BPN) also played a key role in ensuring fair and legal land acquisition processes in Wadas Village. Unfortunately, BPN failed to maintain transparency and accountability in managing the land acquisition process, leading to dissatisfaction and conflict among the residents. The expropriation of land without considering the villagers rights, especially during land acquisition, became a significant trigger for human rights violations.

The military (TNI) and police (POLRI), whose job is to maintain security, instead became involved in repressive actions against villagers who opposed the mining project. There have been numerous reports of physical and psychological violence committed by security forces against Wadas Village residents. These repressive actions ignored human rights principles and intimidated a community that should have been protected. As residents attempted to defend their land rights, the involvement of security forces worsened the situation, causing deep trauma, especially for women and children.

The Governor of Central Java holds significant responsibility in this conflict. As the regional leader, the governor should have ensured that all projects within his jurisdiction did not result in human rights violations. However, the issuance of Izin Penetapan Lokasi (SK 590/20/2021) under his authority is considered flawed, as it neglected the aspirations and rights of Wadas Village residents. The governor

should have prioritized public participation and conducted transparent consultations before approving the project. His failure to consider the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the andesite mining project shows the local governments disregard for the rights of the community. The actions of all these actors highlight the seriousness of human rights violations in the mining conflict in Wadas Village.

Government Responsibility in Wadas Conflict

Under Article 25 of UU Nomor 39 Tahun 1999 tentang Hak Asasi Manusia, everyone has the right to express their opinions publicly, including the right to protest. In the context of Wadas Village, many residents protested against the mining project but faced repressive actions from security forces. These actions potentially violate Article 31 of the same law, which guarantees every citizens right to safety, including protection from unwarranted repressive measures.

Komnas HAM has noted that the agrarian conflict in Wadas Village involves not only the community and the government but also security forces, including the police and military. The involvement of security forces in resolving agrarian conflicts often does not prioritize dialogue and a humane approach, as mandated in Article 2 of UU Nomor 39 Tahun 1999. This violation has created a situation where the community feels threatened rather than protected. As a result, the government is responsible for ensuring that agrarian conflict resolution is conducted in a way that respects peoples rights, without violence or intimidation.

Regarding the conflict resolution recommendations issued by Commission III of the House of Representatives (DPR RI), the government must evaluate the implementation of the project in Wadas Village, including reconsidering the andesite mining site and settling compensation issues. These recommendations aim to prevent further human rights violations and foster constructive dialogue between the government and the community. One key recommendation is for local governments, Badan Pertanahan Nasional, and Balai Besar Wilayah Sungai Serayu Opak to review the material needs for the mining project and explore alternative locations outside of Wadas Village to know the community needs.

The government should use Article 28H of UUD 19945 as basis for develop policies, which in Article 28H of UUD 1945 guarantees every individual the right to a good and healthy environment. Wadas Village holds significant ecological and economic value, and mining could damage the ecosystem and harm local residents. Therefore, the government is obligated to ensure that the environmental impacts of strategic development projects are properly managed and do not negatively affect the community.

Role of The Youth in Wadas Conflict

The activism of Wadas Village residents in defending their land rights reflects a determined and ongoing resistance against the proposed andesite mining in their area. Since 2013, the news of andesite extraction in Wadas has sparked concerns among the locals. The process began in 2015 with soil and rock sampling conducted by the Serayu

Opak River Basin Authority (BBWSSO).[14] A significant moment occurred in 2017 when environmental permit request banners to put in affected villages, but not in Wadas. Then, in March 2018 Surat Keputusan Gubernur Jawa Tengah issued a decree on environmental eligibility, which included Wadas in the land acquisition plan. The people of Wadas, who did not fully understand the process, felt that their signatures from public consultation forums were used unilaterally to approve the environmental permit.

The community resistance grew stronger with the formation of the Gerakan Masyarakat Peduli Alam Desa Wadas (GEMPADEWA), a movement led by local youth. GEMPADEWA became the main platform for voicing opposition to the mining project, particularly through social media. Their Instagram account, @wadas_melawan, consistently shared updates and protest activities, creating a political space for the community to collectively resist.[15]

In addition to GEMPADEWA, a group of women from Wadas Village, known as Wadon Wadas, also played an active role in the resistance. As part of GEMPADEWA's organizational efforts, Wadon Wadas engaged in various forms of activism, including putting up banners, creating protest songs, and symbolically wrapping *stagen* cloth (Javanese cloth, traditional fabric belt worn by women) around trees as a sign of resistance. Despite facing repressive actions from security forces, they remained steadfast and united.

4 Conclusions

Mining conflict in Wadas Village reveal serious human rights violations, affecting the economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as the civil and political rights of the residents and psychological trauma due to the coercive approach taken by security forces. Human rights violations were worsen by the lack of transparency in decision-making and the minimal involvement of the local community in the process. The government has failed to provide adequate rehabilitation or resolve post-conflict issues fairly, leaving residents rights, including their rights to land and a healthy environment, not fully restored.

Youth play a crucial role in ensuring the effective and efficient enforcement of human rights in Indonesia. Through active involvement in cases like the agrarian conflict in Wadas Village, the youth have shown that they can serve as a bridge between the community and the government, while also leading sustainable human rights campaigns.

Future research can deepen the analysis of the role of state actors in agrarian conflicts, especially regarding human rights monitoring mechanisms in national strategic development projects. Additionally, further studies could explore the long-term impacts of such conflicts on the mental and social well-being of affected residents, and evaluate more comprehensive efforts to restore their rights.

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