

Indonesian Democratic Government Fails to End Suffering of Millions Children due to Forest Fire

News:

Six Indonesian provinces have declared a state of emergency as haze from wildfires on Sumatra and Kalimantan Island continues to blanket entire cities, a spokesman for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan and South Kalimantan had all declared haze emergencies.

"There are around 25.6 million Indonesians in Sumatra and Kalimantan who are directly exposed to the haze due to forest fires," the BNPB spokesman said in Jakarta. "They breathe in very unhealthy air; thousands of people are suffering from respiratory tract infections."

Sutopo said that as of Friday morning, no less than 80 percent of Sumatra had been impacted by the smoke to some degree. (Jakarta Globe, 9th of October 2015)

Comment:

Smog from peat forest fires has been a silent killer that threatens the health of tens of millions of people in Indonesia. There are at least 26.5 million people in Sumatra and Kalimantan in toxic smog siege. According to official data, since the beginning of October 2015 five children have lost their lives and 222,984 inhabitants have suffered from Respiratory Tract Infection. Infants, toddlers, children, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly and people with chronic diseases such as asthma, are the most vulnerable group shadowed by death. Also pregnant women are threatened by miscarriage. In the long term, a potential of a million of mentally challenged children will emerge as well as new cases of lung cancer and other deadly diseases.

Repeated disasters since 18 years ago shows a fundamental mistake in governing the peat forest. Indonesian government which declares as democratic government has ignored the position of forest and peat land as public property that must be managed by the state for public welfare orientation. Some legislation authorizes a special right in the form of concession management to control forests and peat lands given to individual (corporate) including foreign corporations. People should realize the Government Regulation on the Protection and Ecosystem Management Peat and tightening concession permits and other regulations will not be able to eliminate the profit orientation that underlies the corporate activities of concessionaires. Also the ratification of world conventions on climate change, the Kyoto protocol and the concept of REDD PLUS proved only to perpetuate governance of these miserable people.

Complete solutions

Disaster due to land and forest fires are very difficult or even impossible to end in the capitalist democratic system as today. Because, for the sake of profit orientation, millions of hectares of forest and land concessions given to the private sector. In fact, that is the one of the root causes.

Catastrophic forest fires and land will only be terminated due to the Islamic system through two approaches: *shariah approach (law)* and *ijrâ'i (practical)*.

In Shairah, Islam establishes that forests are included in the public ownership (owned by the whole people). The Prophet (saw) said:

«المسلمون شركاء في ثلاث في الكلا والماء والنار»

“Muslim associate in three cases, namely pastures, water and fire” (Abu Dawud and Ahmad).

As public property, unlawful forest concessioned to private individuals and companies. With this provision, the underlying causes of forest fires and land cases can be eliminated. In that way, peat lands and forest fires can be prevented entirely from the beginning.

Management of forests as public property must be made by the state for the benefit of the people, it must be sustainable. Being fully managed by the state, it would be easy to strike a balance between economic interests, the interests of the people and the preservation of forests. The state also should educate and build community awareness to achieve forest sustainability and to maintain benefits for generation after generation.

If forest and land fires still happen, then the government must address the issue because the government must pay attention to the affairs of its people and maintain their welfare. The government will be held accountable for it.

As in *ijrâ'i*, the government must take steps in management and certain policies using cutting-edge science and technology as well as to empower the experts and the general public in the prevention and mitigation of the impact of fires.

O Muslims:

Ending the land and forest fires completely with the two approaches, *Shariah and ijrâ'i*, can only be realized with the application of Islamic Shariah as a whole. It can only be realized through the implementation of Islamic Shariah in the Khilafah Rashidah upon the method of the Prophethood. This is what must be realized as soon as possible by all the Muslims of this country. With the variety of man-made disasters, including catastrophic smog, can be terminated. In the end, the public will be able to feel the peaceful life without worrying about disasters caused by human activities.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Iffah Ainur Rochmah
Spokeswoman of Hizb ut Tahrir in Indonesia**