

## **Conflict in the PT Asiatic Persada Concession leads to a casualty**

Evictions of residents and destruction of their houses and property was most recently carried out by PT Asiatic Persada against Suku Anak Dalam indigenous communities at the hamlets of Pinang Tinggi, Tanah Menang and Terawang in December 2013. PT Asiatic Persada is now persecuting indigenous people again, this time the victims are from the village of Bungku.

The incident started at 15:12 on Wednesday 5 March 2014, when Mr Titus (aged 26) was forcibly taken by six members of the military (TNI) from his home in Mentilingan hamlet, part of the village of Bungku, in the Bajung subdistrict of Batang Hari District, Jambi. Mr Titus was taken by police patrol vehicles to the factory of PT Asiatic Persada (PT AP) in Sungai Kandang, a distance of about 3 km from his home. During that journey, Mr Titus was hit, kicked and urinated on by the military personnel accompanying him.

There are indications that Mr Titus' forcible removal by the military was related to the recent action of TNI soldiers who were observed destroying a marker showing community lands placed by the lawyer of residents of Mentilingan hamlet, to highlight their conflict with two subsidiaries of PT Asiatic Persada – PT JummerTulen and Pt Maju Perkasa Sawit. It is alleged that these companies do not have all the necessary licenses to establish their plantation which affects the Mentilingan hamlet.

At 15:40 as Mr Titus arrived with the soldiers at the PT AP factory, he was again punched and beaten by two soldiers using rattan canes. Later, Titus asked the soldiers to clean his wounds which were dripping blood on to the floor of the security post of PT AP, outside the factory.

16:10 The victim's family and about twenty other residents of Mentilingan hamlet came to the factory of PT AP to ask about Mr Titus. In response the soldiers fired shots towards the villagers and into the air to keep them away.

16:30 As other residents and members of the Suku Anak Dalam community arrived, they were immediately beaten and abused by the military and security officers of PT AP. The victims of the beatings were: Mr Puji (aged 34 years), Mr Khoris Kuris (71 years), Mr Adi (24 years), Mr Ismail (38 years), Mr Yanto (31 years) and Mr Dada (56 years).

Mr Puji was beaten and taken directly, without resisting, by the security officers of PT Asiatic Persada and the soldiers, who were on their motor vehicles. The residents who wanted to help the victims were driven off by multiple volleys fired at them by the soldiers.

16:45 The residents watched as two ambulances of PT Asiatic Persada left the factory area. According to Mr Titus, while Mr Puji was in one of the ambulances, the staff of PT AP continued to beat and torture him.

19:30 The ambulance carrying Mr Puji arrived at Bayangkara and immediately left him there. According to staff of the hospital, Mr Puji was still alive but in a critical condition.

20:00 The five other victims of the beatings arrived by ambulance at the Raden Mataher hospital, also in Jambi city (The distance from the location of the beatings in Bungku to the city of Jambi is about 150 km, and takes about 3 hours to drive).

22:00 Residents in Bungku village continue to hear shots being fired.

22:50 Some of the Bungku residents and their representatives receive information that Mr Puji had been taken to Bayangkara hospital .

23:03: Mr Puji is declared dead, while still in handcuffs, his face covered in blood and bruises.

This incident will tarnish the face of industrial oil palm plantations in Indonesia, amid current efforts by the government to promote its sustainable palm oil system, Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) which is a mandatory requirement on oil palm plantations operating in Indonesia. Until last year, PT Asiatic Persada was owned by the Wilmar group, and was participating in dispute resolution efforts with affected communities mediated by the World Bank's IFC Compliance Audit Ombudsman. Wilmar/ PT AP however, failed to resolve its conflicts with communities, and Wilmar unilaterally transferred ownership of PT AP to PT AMS – part of the Ganda group. Wilmar recently released a new policy, "No Deforestation , No Peat , No exploitation".



Mr Puji died of his wounds with his legs and hands still handcuffed.

(source of photos, Perkumpulan Hijau)

For further information, contact Uki at Setara uki@setarajambi.org