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## [Indonesia: Indigenous Balik reject the plan to evict their villages along the Sepaku river](#)

JATAM East Kalimantan Media Release

(Sepaku, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Monday 13th March, 2023). Today, dozens of Indigenous people from Balik tribe in Sepaku Lama Village, North Penajam Paser Utara Regency, East Kalimantan, Indonesia carried out the action of installing various banners and billboards containing statements rejecting the plan to evict their villages and homes around and along the Sepaku river for the project management of Floods or normalization of the Sepaku River center of Indonesia new capital city.

The Kalimantan IV River basin Center Project and Ministry of Public works and human settlements of Indonesia (Kementerian PUPR), which is worth 242 billion rupiah and has been run by contractors PT Abipraya and KSO Prima since early 2023, has been protested against evicting the indigenous people of the suku Balik and their living place.

Dozens of residents, consisting of traditional leaders, women and youth, started putting up the various banners and signs since 09.00 in the morning in front of their houses also near the public facilities in Sepaku Lama village. Some of the message contents in these banners and billboards are carried out including;

**“Indigenous People of Balik Tribes Refuse Eviction of Ancestral Historical Sites !”**

**“Indigenous People of Balik Tribes Rejecting Village Eviction Programme at New Capital City !”**

**“Indigenous Peoples of Balik Tribes Against Relocation! ”**

The Installation of the banners and billboards is a counter response to government installation and land measurement without consent by project implementer. The Installation of Banners also a follow up to the implementation of the results the previous customary meeting on February, 23, which was attended by more than 80 residents in Sepaku Lama Village and Pamaluan Village, there are 8 points of demands ;

1. The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe in new capital city reject the village eviction programme
2. The Sepaku Indigenous People do not want to be relocated or moved to another area by the government
3. The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe reject the eviction of ancestral historical sites, cemeteries or certain places that are believed to be traditional tribal sites for generations
4. The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe refuse relocated or separated from their ancestral lands
5. The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe refuse the sub-district, village name change and river change name

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6. The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe asked the Government to immediately make a policy for the recognition and protection of The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe in Sepaku Sub-district
  7. The government pays special attention to the Balik Tribes who become impacted, environmental and social by new capital city development project
  8. The Indigenous People of the Balik tribe reject and irresponsible if there's a figure or a group who act on behalf Balik Tribe to make agreements related to policy in New capital City without directly involving the indigenous community

This flood management or river normalization project is also linking with another project, The Sepaku River Intake Water Dam which was also previously on going project before and also impacted to communities land grabbing.

These projects took place throughout February 2023. River Regional Office (BWS) Kalimantan IV together with contractors (Abipraya and Prima KSO) also the consultant for this project Aditya Engineering Consultant, is currently holding public consultations through a series of meeting to run land acquisition plan for the construction of this project with—including 22 residents of RT 03 as part of the effort to prepare a LARAP (land Acquisition and Resettlement Action Plan) which ends up persuading residents to gave up his land and village.

This project will build a number of embankments on the right and left of the river flow. On the right of the long flow of the earthen embankment reaches 1,728.172 meters and the left of the flow 706,178 meters There is also a 1,647,230 meters CCSP (Corrugated Concrete Sheet Pile). On the right of the flow and on the left of the flow is 670,081 meters. In addition there is also an embankment precast panels.

In Indonesian Law Number 2/2012 and Government Regulation Number 19/2021 Concerning Land Procurement for Development for Public Interest is stated that affected residents/communities have the right to express objection and objections contained in articles 33 and 34.

In fact, in articles 37 and 39, if the residents objections are accepted, then the project development requires land acquisition can be canceled or relocated to another place.

To be known other than the Intake Sepaku Water Dam project which is connected to the Sepaku river normalization project and also Sepaku Semoi water Dam there will still be various plans other dam construction project such as the Batu lepek water Dam and Selamayu water Dam, all of this are part of the basic infrastructure project provision of raw water resources for more than 2 million new residents in the area of Indonesia New Capital City.

## **Indigenous Women Voice Rejecting Evictions**

The existence of this flood management / normalization project and Intake Sepaku river water dam project will threaten the loss of the Suku Balik Indigenous Settlement, it also indirectly it will also eliminate part of the indigenous history behind, including eliminatin the collective rights of the indigenous women, where rights of indigenous women's collective is a set of right derived from a knowledge who are closely related to the area managed by indigenous women located within the customary territory.

The collective rights of indigenous women can be translated as a form of internal access utilization, management, maintenance, development and sustainability generation of land and natural resources that exist within customary territories.

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That means with the occurrence of evictions in the customary territory of this indigenous community then will also eliminate the collective rights of indigenous women who are very close related to their management area such as gardens, rivers and forests.

The duty of the state is to pay attention to and provide protection for rights individual or communal rights of Indigenous peoples, who reflecting the cultural values.

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