

**December 18, 2024**

## **INDONESIA**

### **URGENT ALERT**

# **Violent attacks against Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia by the Rempang Eco City National Strategic Project developers**

*[This is a developing story]*

The Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) condemns the violent attacks against the Rempang Indigenous Peoples in Rempang, Batam, in Indonesia by the security guards of the Rempang Eco City National Strategic Project developers on midnight of December 18, 2024.

The alliance of Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders and legal experts in the archipelago – the Perhimpunan Pembela Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (PPMAN) reported the incident and appealed for urgent support. PPMAN's report revealed that in the early morning of December 18, dozens of employees of the project developer – PT Makmur Elok Graha (MEG) came to Rempang and attacked the residents. Last year, the Indonesian government hastened the National Strategic Project to turn Rempang into an economic hub and ignored the right of the Rempang Indigenous Peoples to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). The people on the island have been protesting the project as it is evicting residents of Rempang, including Indigenous Peoples, and the loss of their primary livelihood which is fishing. The declaration of the project as a “national strategic project” has given more power to authorities to clear the land including evicting the residents. The eviction started last year, and tension has been escalating.

Before the violence ensued, the villagers apprehended an employee of the PT MEG destroying a banner of the community that expresses their rejection of the project. The villagers, before turning over the employee to the police, wanted to have a written agreement with the PT MEG to not set foot in their village again. The negotiation failed and in the early morning of December 18, around 20 PT MEG employees entered the village by force.

They arrived riding seven (7) four-wheeled vehicles, and eight (8) motorcycles. They were armed with weapons such as arrows, machetes, knives, and clubs. They

attacked the residents leaving 8 people injured. The violent attack led the community to flee to the forest for safety. There were village posts destroyed and dozens of motorcycles belonging to the Indigenous villages that were vandalized.

The injured were brought to the hospital for treatment. The injuries suffered are the following:

4 people suffered head injuries.

1 person was seriously injured.

1 person was hit by an arrow.

1 person suffered a broken hand.

1 person suffered a physical injury.

IPRI calls on the government of Indonesia to immediately investigate the incident and hold the perpetrators into account.

IPRI also urges the Indonesian government to stop the eviction process and heed the calls of the Rempang Indigenous Peoples to stop the project as it did not recognize their right to their ancestral lands and waters and their right to free, prior, and informed consent.

Sources:

- 1) Perhimpunan Pembela Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (PPMAN)
- 2) <https://en.tempo.co/read/1954268/remgang-residents-claim-attack-by-pt-meg-officers-9-injured>
- 3) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-67051969>