



Conflict Resolution in Aceh: A Sociological Study of Ecological Sustainability and Palm Oil

Suadi Zainal

Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh

Iromi Ilham

Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh

Fakhrurrazi

Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh

Awaludin Arifin

Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh

Faizul Aulia

Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh

Email: suadi@unimal.ac.id

Abstract: This article aims to explain the complexity of the realities surrounding the resolution of the conflict that occurred in Aceh, Indonesia related to the transformation of the Aceh Darul Islam movement and ecological sustainability in the development of oil palm in Aceh Tamiang Regency. This resolution in the form of oil palm development in Aceh Tamiang was carried out as empowerment of former DI/TII troops to reduce the occurrence of armed conflict in Aceh. On the other hand, the existence of palm oil plantations of former DI/TII troops in Aceh Tamiang raises concern about the reality of the impact of ecological sustainability. This study was carried out using qualitative methods, analyzed using sociological law theory. Data was collected by means of interviews and documentation studies. The results showed that The conflict transformation of the Aceh Darul Islam movement focused on the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society with an emphasis on social, economic, and political aspects. This process involved economic empowerment, particularly through the oil palm plantation programme, to achieve peace and improve welfare in Aceh. The central government engaged in diplomacy with former DI/TII elites, integrating them in the development of oil palm plantations to maintain stability. Furthermore, it can be asserted that in the perspective of law sociology, the transformation of conflict resolution is the presence of the state that is able to create peace and social harmonisation through ecological sustainability with the release of green land and environmental management. Overall, conflict resolution efforts in the form of economic empowerment, environmental preservation and social order are key elements in building peace and sustainability in Aceh.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, ecological sustainability, oil palm development, DI/TII transformation, sociological law

Abstrak: Artikel ini hendak memaparkan kompleksitas realitas yang mengitari resolusi konflik yang terjadi di Aceh, Indonesia terkait dengan transformasi gerakan Darul Islam Aceh dan keberlanjutan ekologi dalam pengembangan kelapa sawit di Kabupaten Aceh Tamiang. Resolusi tersebut dalam bentuk pengembangan kelapa sawit di Aceh Tamiang dilakukan sebagai pemberdayaan eks pasukan DI/TII untuk meredam terjadinya konflik bersenjata di Aceh. Namun disisi lain keberadaan perkebunan kelapa sawit eks pasukan DI/TII di Aceh Tamiang telah menjadi kekhawatiran akan kenyataan dampak keberlanjutan ekologi. Studi ini dilakukan melalui metode kualitatif, dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori sosiologi hukum. Data dikumpulkan dengan cara wawancara dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transformasi konflik gerakan Darul Islam Aceh memfokuskan reintegrasi eks kombatan ke dalam masyarakat sipil dengan penekanan pada aspek sosial, ekonomi, dan politik. Proses ini melibatkan pemberdayaan ekonomi, terutama melalui program perkebunan kelapa sawit, sebagai upaya untuk mencapai perdamaian dan meningkatkan kesejahteraan di Aceh. Pemerintah pusat terlibat dalam diplomasi dengan mantan elit DI/TII, mengintegrasikannya dalam pengembangan perkebunan kelapa sawit untuk menjaga stabilitas. Lebih jauh dapat ditegaskan bahwa dalam perspektif sosiologi hukum, transformasi resolusi konflik tersebut merupakan kehadiran negara yang mampu menciptakan perdamaian, harmonisasi sosial melalui keberlanjutan ekologi dengan pelepasan lahan hijau dan pengelolaan lingkungan. Secara keseluruhan, upaya resolusi konflik dalam bentuk pemberdayaan ekonomi, pelestarian lingkungan, dan keteraturan sosial menjadi elemen kunci dalam membangun perdamaian dan keberlanjutan di Aceh.

Kata Kunci: Resolusi konflik, keberlanjutan ekologi, pengembangan kelapa sawit, transformasi DI/TII, sosiologi hukum

Introduction

The commercialisation of oil palm plantations in Aceh has been introduced by the Dutch colonisers since 1911, precisely in the eastern coastal area of Aceh and Sumatra or currently inside the Aceh Tamiang District.¹ Furthermore, the first palm oil export was pioneered by Adrien Hallet and K. Schadt in 1919, with a total of 576 tonnes.² Along with the increased production, the Dutch East Indies government gave the broadest opportunity to European private plantations, called *ondernimingslanbouw*, to invest in oil palm plantations

¹ Yolar Ngwangkfu, et.al., "Oil palm production: Actors, Roles and Activities in the Value Chain," *American Journal of Agriculture* 3, No. 1 (2021), p. 21-34. Fajar Okta Widarta, et.al., "Plant Diversity in Oil Palm Plantations in Tanjung Seumantoh, Karang Baru, Aceh Tamiang," *Biologi Edukasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Biologi* 12, No. 1 (2020), p. 22-29. Rustam Effendi Lubis and S P Agus Widanarko, *Buku Pintar Kelapa Sawit* (Jakarta: AgroMedia, 2011).

² Christian Lund, "Predatory Peace: Dispossession at Aceh's Oil Palm Frontier," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45, no. 2 (2018), p. 431-52.

in Aceh. The policy was implemented in response to the reduction in exports of pepper, copra, rubber, and areca nuts caused by the global price situation at the time. Furthermore, the motive for establishing plantation operations in Sumatra is due to the region's relative safety and absence of war.³

This situation did not last long; on 12 March 1942, the Dutch East Indies Government ended its rule in Aceh and became the beginning of a new period of Japanese occupation in Aceh. The people of Aceh gladly accepted the Japanese landing in Aceh because long before the Japanese came to Aceh, they had made direct contact with the All Aceh Ulema Association (*Persatuan Ulama Se-Aceh/PUSA*) leaders, such as Tgk. Mohd. Daud Beureueh, Tgk. Abdul Wahab Seulimum, Amir Hussein Al Mujahid and other independence fighters. Unfortunately, during the Japanese occupation, Aceh was devastated in the economic field, especially agriculture and trade.

Following the Republic of Indonesia's independence in 1945, the country was not completely free of colonial influence, particularly in the economic sector, as foreigners continued to undermine the national economy until 1950. In the 1950s, Indonesia's economic sector was still dominated by foreign-owned corporations established by the Dutch East Indies Government, and they were still in power in Indonesia. However, the Indonesian government began the process of asset nationalisation with the Dutch East Indies in December 1947, with plantation holdings involving 246 Dutch private businesses accounting for 90% of the total. As a response to the Dutch harsh approach to resolving the West Irian crisis, this policy included private assets under the control of the Dutch East Indies government in Aceh⁴.

The conditions were not economically favourable. Another bloody war broke out in Aceh on 12 September 1953, the Darul Islam/Indonesian Islamic Army (*Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia/DI/TII*) rebellion under the leadership of Mohd. Daud Beureueh was proclaimed with a team of members who were military soldiers of the people's army (Mujahidin, Pesindo, etc.). The conflict ended on 7 April 1959, referred to as the Lamteh Pledge, a peace between the central government and the Acehnese DI/TII group.⁵

As part of its efforts to alter the DI/TII conflict in Aceh, the Indonesian government developed oil palm farms in the Aceh Tamiang district. Several former DI/TII personnel, like Tuan Sati, A. Gani Mutyara, and Sulaiman Saleh,

³ Desi Amelia, "Sejarah Terbentuknya Pemerintahan Tamiang 1874-1912," *Seuneubok Lada* 2, no. 2 (2015), p. 89-98.

⁴ Halimatussa'diah Simangunsong and S Suprayitno, "Nasionalisasi Perusahaan-Perusahaan Asing Di Aceh Timur Tahun 1945-1968," *Sindang: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah dan Kajian Sejarah* 1, no. 2 (2019), p. 67-77.

⁵ Khairul Ummami, "Penyelesaian Konflik Darul Islam Aceh Tahun 1957-1959," n.d. Apipudin Apipudin, "Daud Beureueh and The Darul Islam Rebellion in Aceh," *Buletin Al-Turas* 22, No. 1 (2016), p. 145-167.

have transformed into plantation entrepreneurs due to government-provided land 'compensation'. This fact resulted in two distinct versions inside the society. First, the government paid the planters for their desire to end the uprising and make peace. Second, because they wanted to start their own plantations, the government granted them cheap land. The site is then managed for oil palm cultivation.⁶

The existence of palm oil plantations by former DI/TII troops in Aceh Tamiang has denied the negative impacts of the existence of palm oil plantations, especially palm oil-related conflicts that have been widely documented in Indonesia⁷. The development of oil palm ex-DI/TII troops is not only a damper on the sustainability of conflict in Aceh but also able to maintain social and ecological balance. This is clearly different from oil palm development in general, which impacts ecological sustainability, resulting in deforestation, loss of biodiversity, water and soil pollution, excessive water, soil erosion, energy use, carbon emissions, habitat loss, migration of animals,⁸ social agrarian conflict and natural disasters,⁹ loss of biodiversity due to the replacement of forests and peatlands, as well as poor labour conditions in some areas of the world's population.¹⁰

The management system carried out by former DI/TII combatant oil palm companies can maintain social and ecological balance. Therefore, this study describes how the pattern of oil palm development by former DI/TII troops is more environmentally friendly and sustainable peace in Aceh Tamiang.¹¹ This study contrasts with some views that show concern over the negative environmental impacts of oil palm plantations, as mentioned above. On the other hand, palm oil is one of the primary trading commodities in Indonesia, in addition

⁶ Khairul Ummami, "Penyelesaian Konflik Darul Islam.

⁷ Krystof Obidzinski, et. al., "Environmental and Social Impacts of Oil Palm Plantations and Their Implications for Biofuel Production in Indonesia," *Ecology and Society* 17, no. 1 (2012). Lucy Rist, et.al., "The Livelihood Impacts of Oil Palm: Smallholders in Indonesia," *Biodiversity and Conservation* 19 (2010), p. 1009–24.

⁸ Courtney L Morgans et al., "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Palm Oil Certification in Delivering Multiple Sustainability Objectives," *Environmental Research Letters* 13, no. 6 (2018)..

⁹ Adhariani, Siska, and Afrizal Afrizal. "Palm Oil and Natural Disasters: Sociological Meanings of Discourses on the Ecological Impact of Oil Palm Expansion." *Society* 9, no. 1 (2021). Kepe, Thembela Kepe and Nyanquoi Suah. "Land and Fragility of Peace in Postwar Liberia: Concessions and Conflicts in the Midst of Poverty." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 16, no. 3 (2021).

¹⁰ Steve Chapman, et. al., "Exploitation of Northern Peatlands and Biodiversity Maintenance: A Conflict between Economy and Ecology," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 1, no. 10 (2003), p. 525–32.

¹¹ Rangi Ade Febrian and Ahmad Fitra Yuza, "Plantation Sector Policy Governance by the Regional Government of Riau Province (Leading Commodities Study)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 1 (2023), p. 345–62.

to petroleum and gas.¹² For example, palm oil is still the leading commodity in Riau Province, although the added value of the plantation is still constrained due to the slow downstream programme.¹³ Oil palm has been a successful driver of development in Southeast Asia.¹⁴

The issue of environmental sustainability is receiving increasing attention from governments, consumers and companies around the world.¹⁵ This is related to climate change, which has become a global issue because of its impact on human life.¹⁶ While ecological sustainability is widely accepted and recognised, the reality on the ground can differ, as revealed in this study of a former DI/TII oil palm plantation in Aceh Tamiang District. In fact, the company shows a high commitment to ecological sustainability and development by allocating its Cultivation Rights Title (*Hak Guna Usaha/HGU*) land as a green area that can be utilised by the local community. This step is taken to minimise the negative impact of plantation activities on the environment.

In this paper, the researcher does not intend to defend the company's corporate actions related to environmental damage. Instead, the focus is on analysing aspects of ecological sustainability in the context of oil palm plantations. Given the uncertainty regarding companies' practices in conducting business to support ecological sustainability, this research aims to analyse how actors deal with the situation. The researcher will not impose their definition of sustainability when evaluating the compliance of relevant parties; instead, he will analyse variations in the definition of value based on the actors' perspectives. Before entering such analyses, this article briefly explains the relationship between conflict resolution and the management of oil palm plantations by former DI/TII elites in Aceh Tamiang District.

This study was carried out using qualitative methods, analyzed using sociology of law theory. Qualitative research is conducted in natural conditions and is discovered in nature.¹⁷ Qualitative research, as a human instrument,

¹² Salsabilah Hamid and Paramitaningrum Paramitaningrum, "Indonesian Economic Diplomacy toward Palm Oil: Indonesia's Respond to the EU Resolution on Palm Oil and Deforestation of Rainforest (2016/2222 (INI))," in *E3S Web of Conferences*, vol. 388 (2023).

¹³ Ranggi Ade Febrian et al., "Local Government Innovation Model in Pekanbaru City, Indonesia: A Study of Public Service Mall," *Otoritas: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 13, no. 2 (2023), p. 302–314.

¹⁴ Oliver Pye, "Commodifying Sustainability: Development, Nature and Politics in the Palm Oil Industry," *World Development* 121 (2019), p. 218–28.

¹⁵ Michiel J F Van Pelt, et.al., "Environmental Sustainability: Issues of Definition and Measurement," *International Journal of Environment and Pollution* 5, no. 2–3 (1995), p. 204–23.

¹⁶ Tri Harnowo and Fachry Hasani Habib, "Islamic Law and Environment Issues: Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwas on Climate Change," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 24, no. 1 (2024), p. 101–118.

¹⁷ Patrik Aspers and Ugo Corte, "What Is Qualitative in Research," *Qualitative Sociology*, 2021. Dilanthi Amaratunga et al., "Quantitative and Qualitative Research in the Built

determines the focus of the study, selects informants as data sources, assesses data quality, analyses data, interprets data and makes conclusions on everything. This qualitative method is open and dynamic, allowing informants to express their experiences openly.¹⁸ In this study, the researcher considered the qualitative method to be able to examine DI/TII oil palm development and ecological sustainability in Aceh Tamiang.

This study was conducted in the eastern coastal area of Aceh Tamiang District, Aceh Province. In this case, the author analyses conflict transformation based on oil palm development and ecological sustainability in Aceh Tamiang. The topic of this paper is then studied through a descriptive qualitative approach, where qualitative information is described theoretically and analytically. In addition to these aspects, the researcher also describes the development of DI/TII oil palm and ecological sustainability. Information obtained in this paper was obtained from company owners, workers, village heads (*Datuk or Kepala Desa*), foremen and local residents in Aceh Tamiang. The target or object of this study is the families of the combatants of the DI/TII movement in Aceh Tamiang. Meanwhile, informants in this research are subjects who understand information from the object of study. Researchers obtained data and information about oil palm development and ecological sustainability from informants that the researcher met in the field.

Palm Oil and Ecological Sustainability

In observing and analysing the conflict transformation of DI/TII and oil palm development in Aceh Tamiang, this article aims to look at the success of ecological sustainability concerning conflict transformation through oil palm development. The economic existence of oil palm does not only function in conflict transformation and poverty alleviation in Aceh Tamiang. However, oil palm development has encouraged the creation of ecological sustainability by utilising former rubber plantations and pond areas in the Aceh Tamiang region. Ecological sustainability is an essential concept in ecological science, as well as understanding how humans and the natural environment can interact in a balanced

Environment: Application of 'Mixed' Research Approach," *Work Study* 51, no. 1 (2002), p. 17–31.

¹⁸ Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly, "Reflexive Practice in Live Sociology: Lessons from Researching Brexit in the Lives of British Citizens Living in the EU-27," *Qualitative Research* 22, no. 2 (2022), p. 177–93. Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, Edisi Revisi, Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 2019.

and sustainable manner.¹⁹ Ecological sustainability includes Ecosystem Balance and Conservation of Natural Resources.²⁰

Humans are a part of the ecosystem, and we must use natural resources responsibly. This includes conserving energy, reducing waste, and promoting sustainable agriculture techniques. Protecting the natural environment from pollution and degradation is critical for ecological sustainability. This includes minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, limiting water and air pollution, and effectively managing waste.²¹ It requires education, awareness and collaboration. Ecological sustainability directly impacts human well-being because we depend on the natural environment and its resources, food, clean water and clean air. Therefore, maintaining ecological sustainability is a shared responsibility and a global priority to preserve the planet for future generations.²²

Oil palm development and ecological sustainability are essential and controversial topics in agriculture and the environment. Oil palm is a plant that produces edible oil used in various consumer products, such as food, cosmetics, and biodiesel. However, oil palm development is often associated with severe environmental problems, especially in the tropics. Several important aspects need to be considered in the sustainable development of oil palm. Deforestation is one of the main problems in oil palm development, especially in regions such as Indonesia and Malaysia. To ensure ecological sustainability, it is crucial to protect these precious tropical forests. Sustainable palm oil development practices should prioritise preserving natural forests and avoiding excessive deforestation.

Meanwhile, farmers and companies should implement sustainable agricultural practices, including judicious use of fertilisers and pesticides, erosion control, and good waste management. These help maintain soil and water quality and reduce negative impacts on local ecosystems. Various certification programmes, such as the *Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)*, aim to promote sustainable palm oil development. These certifications set environmental and social standards that must be met by palm oil producers. The role of local communities and governments is crucial in overseeing palm oil development

¹⁹ Suadi Zainal, et. al., "Actualizing Local Knowledge for Sustainable Ecotourism Development in a Protected Forest Area: Insights from the Gayonese in Aceh Tengah, Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2024).

²⁰ Awaludin Arifin et al., "Oil Palm Cultivation and Peaceful Social Development by Former Darul Islam Aceh Members: A Critique of the Impact of HGU Land Management by Palm Oil Companies," in *IICIS 2023: Proceedings of the 4th International Indonesia Conference on Interdisciplinary Studies, IICIS 2023, 2 November 2023, Bandar Lampung, Lampung, Indonesia* (European Alliance for Innovation, 2024), p. 60.

²¹ Mahdi Poursmaieli, et.al., "A Scientometrics View on Sustainable Development in Surface Mining: Everything from the Beginning," *Resources Policy* 82 (2023).

²² Xiaoxuan Peng, et. al., "Recycling Municipal, Agricultural and Industrial Waste into Energy, Fertilizers, Food and Construction Materials, and Economic Feasibility: A Review," *Environmental Chemistry Letters* 21, no. 2 (2023), p. 765–801.

practices in their areas. Governments can issue strict regulations to protect the environment and community rights, while communities can monitor and report violations.

Developing more efficient and sustainable agricultural technologies can help reduce palm oil's negative environmental impact. This includes the use of more productive high-yielding varieties, the use of renewable energy in processing, and the use of data and analytics to optimise production. Options other than oil palm can be considered to reduce pressure on ecosystems and diversify farmers' income. Mixed farming and agroforestry systems are examples of approaches that can be adopted.

Public education and awareness about the impacts of oil palm development and the importance of ecological sustainability are essential to positive change in the industry. By combining sustainable practices, strict regulations, and community engagement, sustainable palm oil development can become a reality. This will help protect the environment, support the livelihoods of local communities, and ensure a sustainable supply of palm oil for global needs.

Conflict Transformation of Former DI/TII Forces and Sustainability of Peace and Ecology

Reintegration is not only a change in military mentality but also in social, economic and political aspects.²³ Reintegration is, therefore, a process. The process by which former combatants and their families become socially, economically and politically integrated into civil society. Former DI/TII troops are socially integrated into civil society when they and their families feel part of and accepted by civil society. The acceptance of former combatants and their families by civil society is a fundamental element of peace building.²⁴ An important part of conflict transformation is developing economic empowerment programmes to support former DI/TII members and conflict-affected communities. The impact of the conflict on communities was tremendous, resulting in profound levels of stress, difficult displacement, and the inhumanity of war.²⁵

The transformation from troops to non-troops DI/TII or precisely from armed struggle to non-armed struggle will occur if economic welfare is created

²³ M Nazaruddin, et. al., "Wali Nanggroe Aceh: Transformasi, Eksistensi Dan Model Penguatan Kelembagaan," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Malikussaleh (JSPM)* 2, no. 2 (2021), p. 238–55.

²⁴ Alpaslan Özerdem, "A Re-Conceptualisation of Ex-Combatant Reintegration: 'Social Reintegration' approach," *Conflict, Security and Development* 12, no. 1 (2012).

²⁵ Mary Melmar G Teves, "Conflict and Displacement: The Life Stories of Internally Displaced Families (IDFs)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 2 (2024), p. 855–76. Fajri M. Kasim and Abidin Nurdin, "Study of Sociological Law on Conflict Resolution Through Adat in Aceh Community According to Islamic Law," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 4, No. 2 (2020).

by redistributing plantation land.²⁶ This reality is the reason that what the Central Government did to provide compensation for oil palm plantations has a vital role for former DI/TII troops. The state is present to solve the problem of welfare for the former DI/TII economy to change the way of struggle, which was initially as a guerrilla in the forest with command management in war to command management in the oil palm business is a success in supporting the economic welfare of former DI/TII troops.

Combining the interests of maintaining peace and promoting economic prosperity to realise democracy and development in Aceh is considered essential by the central government for peace to continue. The central government sought to reduce the potential for armed conflict to recur in Aceh by continuing to develop the democratisation process. In this endeavour, the central government conducted diplomacy with Aceh's DI/TII elites, such as Tuan Sati and Gani Mutiara, by opening oil palm plantations and shrimp ponds. This step encouraged economic growth and welfare for former DI/TII members by developing oil palm plantation commodities, which became a pillar of national income and foreign exchange. It was hoped that the contribution of the plantation sub-sector would not only ease the conflict but also enhance the sustainability of peace in Aceh at that time.

The DI/TII conflict was motivated by the dissatisfaction and disappointment of the Acehnese people with Soekarno's promise (the first president of Indonesia) to implement Islamic Sharia in Aceh and the merging of Aceh Province into the Aceh regency under North Sumatra Province. Divisions arose and grew after Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh, who had served as Military Governor of Aceh, Langkat, and Tanah Karo, declared rebellion against the central government.²⁷ Then, on 20 September 1953, Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureueh declared Aceh as part of the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) of Imam SM Kartosuwiryo based in West Java.²⁸

The DI/TII forces were a rebellion movement in Indonesia from the 1953s to 1959s. This movement aimed to establish a state based on Islamic law in Indonesia. According to historical actors, one of them is Tgk. M. Nur El Ibrahimy argued that the events that became a national problem occurred closely related to and because of the tendency of the centre (Jakarta), which was hypocritical, and the republican officials had disappointed the ulema figures in Aceh. One of the

²⁶ Teuku Kemal Fasya, et.al., "Depoliticization of the Uleebalangs Descendants Due to a History of Past Violent Conflicts," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Malikussaleh (JSPM)* 4, no. 1 (2023), p. 102–11.

²⁷ Maisal Gusri Daulay and Teuku Abdullah, "Pemukiman Militer Peninggalan Belanda Di Banda Aceh (Kajian Komparasi Perkembangan Pemukiman Militer Di Neusu Jaya Dan Kuta Alam, 1900-2015)," *JIM: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah* 2, no. 2 (2017).

²⁸ Ioana Emy Matesan, Darul Islam in West Java: The Rise and Fall of an Islamist Insurgency in Indonesia, In book: *The Violence Pendulum*, 2020. Miftakhur Ridlo, "Negara Islam Indonesia Dan Kartosuwiryo," *Humanistika: Jurnal Keislaman* 5, No. 2 (2019), p. 134-155.

areas famous for the presence of DI/TII troops is the Tamiang area, formerly included in the East Aceh Regency of Aceh Province, Indonesia.²⁹

According to the author's study, the number of DI/TII forces in Aceh Tamiang who battled to fulfill their goals is unknown, although it is estimated to be 800. At the very least, the East Aceh, Langsa, and Aceh Tamiang districts served as bases for DI/TII troops on Aceh's east coast. Some important figures on the east coast of Aceh included Amir Husin Al-Mujahid (Deputy DI/TII Aceh), who married the daughter of the king of Tamiang Pocut Hariani, A.G Mutiara (Minister of Information) and Tuan Sati (Treasurer and Equipment).

Other evidence that eastern Aceh was a base for DI/TII troops was the attack on a police post in Perlak, a township led by Ghazali Idris. After the battle erupted in Langsa, the Darul Islam forces were repulsed after government troops received reinforcements from Medan. The Darul Islam troops entered the mountains. In 1953, at the peak of DI/TI, Husein Al-Mujahid's troops entered the forest. They were in the Serbajadi area, Lokop Gayo Lues. At that time, all DI/TII soldiers from Idie were there. Although there was a ceasefire (*Sespayer*) and the presence of Abu Nek da (as the Husein Al-Mujahid family called Teuku Daud Beureueh), his presence also carried out a feast slaughtering 7 oxen.³⁰

The Central Government formed a mission to resolve the DI/TII rebellion in Aceh led by Waperdam I Hardi S.H., who was in charge of negotiating with the Aceh Darul Islam party. As a result of the agreement between the two parties, the decision of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia No. 1/Missi/1959 dated 31 May 1959 was issued, namely the establishment of the Aceh Special Region based on Law No. 1 of 1957 which adheres to the principle of the widest possible autonomy, especially in the fields of religion, custom, and education. The conflict from 1953 ended in 1959 and was resolved through negotiations. The central government realised the mistake it had made. Aceh became a Special Region of Aceh (DISTA) province. DI/TII, the Aceh Ulema Association (PUSA) and their supporters returned to the fold of Indonesia.

In anticipation of a prolonged conflict and increased casualties, especially on the part of Acehnese civilians, and with DI/TII being difficult to eradicate militarily due to its widespread sympathisers within the Acehnese community, the central government was forced to seek alternative approaches and strategies. The first alternative was for the central government to appoint Acehnese officers as the highest military leaders in Aceh, such as Syamaun Gaharu and T. Hamzah. Through these officers, the central government's ideas could be socialised, resulting in an agreement called the Lamteh Pledge.

To avoid another rebellion. The former leaders of Darul Islam Aceh received compensation for plantation land. Among them, Hasan Saleh received a

²⁹ Teuku Kemal Fasya, et. al., "Political Trauma of Uleebalang Descendants over Past Conflict in the City of Lhokseumawe, Aceh," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 10, no. 1 (2023).

³⁰ Interview with Cut Nurdanila, Taming Community figure, July 22, 2023.

tea plantation in West Java. Meanwhile, in Aceh Tamiang, he was given a former Dutch rubber plantation. The plantations were owned by Tuan Sati, PT Mopoli Raya, and A.G. Mutiara, PT Parasawita. Tuan Sati was the treasurer of Battalion 435, and Hasan Saleh was the former treasurer of DI-TII Aceh Tamiang.³¹

The facts show that not all former members of the DI/TII forces received compensation for oil palm plantation land. Supposedly, former Aceh's Darul Islam forces members should have been empowered with jobs, but unfortunately, they were left behind. The impact of this neglect led to most former DI/TII members being divided, with only 50 of the 400 former troops continuing their army careers. At the same time, the rest did not receive any compensation.³² This reality was reflected in the number of DI/TII members who rejoined the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in 1976. Furthermore, it should be noted that PT Mopoli Raya and PT Parasawita were not owned by former DI/TII members; instead, they were the individual holdings of Tuan Sati and A. Gani Mutiara.

Along the way, the former DI/TII company released some plantation areas to benefit green land areas. These areas are deliberately excluded from the Cultivation Rights Title (HGU) to act as green open spaces that provide environmental benefits, including providing oxygen, filtering air pollution and improving air quality. The release of green land can support environmental functions such as ecosystem balance, biodiversity preservation, and rainwater absorption. The presence of such areas is important for biodiversity through the release of greenfields that contribute to the preservation of flora and fauna. Green areas can act as natural habitats for various plants and animals. This effort is carried out as a form of preservation and efforts made to protect and preserve biodiversity in the Company's greenfield release areas, such as sustainable management, preservation of rare species, and environmental monitoring as ecological sustainability and reducing environmental impacts.

The ecological security of oil palm plantations refers to efforts to maintain the sustainability of ecosystems surrounding oil palm plantations and minimise their adverse impacts on the surrounding natural environment. Although oil palm plantations are often controversial due to their harmful effects on the environment, some positive impacts can be identified related to the ecological security of oil palm plantations. Some of the favourable ecological security impacts of DI/TII oil palm plantations in Aceh Tamiang have been through the preservation of primary forests, with some oil palm plantations established on land previously cleared from former Dutch East Indies rubber plantations. In some cases, oil palm plantations can help protect the remaining primary forest by allowing land to be used for agriculture.³³

³¹Interview with Ngatimin, Veteran Fighter of the Republic of Indonesia, Tamiang, July 19, 2023.

³² Interview with Ngatimin, Indonesian Veteran Fighter, Tamiang, July 19, 2023.

³³Interview with Samsul Bahri, Tamiang community leader, July 20, 2023.

In addition, shrimp ponds are being converted to plantation areas through conservation revenues. Revenues generated from oil palm plantations can support nature conservation efforts, such as funding forest conservation, environmental research, and other environmental projects. Meanwhile, the ecological security of DI/TII plantations is carried out through integrated livestock farming. Plantation areas are utilised as grazing sites for livestock, such as buffalo and cattle. Some former DI/TII oil palm plantation companies in Aceh Tamiang have collaborated with conservation organisations to provide land for livestock rearing conservation. This may include establishing green corridors or keeping some land as wildlife habitat. This is also in line with RSPO (*Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil*) certification, which is committed to reducing the negative environmental impacts of oil palm plantations. This includes better monitoring and management of pesticide use and sustainable land use.

Oil palm plantations can be a source of livelihood for local communities and help improve their living standards. This can reduce pressure on other natural resources that might otherwise be used for livelihoods. Oil palm plantations can be valuable locations for environmental research, such as studies on biodiversity, soil patterns, or climate change. Data collected from these plantations can be used to understand environmental impacts and develop better mitigation strategies.

In addition, the ecological sustainability impacts of plantations can be managed and mitigated through sustainable agricultural practices, such as agroforestry, judicious use of pesticides, habitat conservation, efficient water management, and other environmentally friendly practices.³⁴ These efforts have been made in the former DI/TII oil palm development in Aceh Tamiang, which aims to minimise negative impacts while enabling sustainable agricultural production and supporting biodiversity and the well-being of local communities.

Despite the positive impacts that can be identified, it is important to remember that DI/TII oil palm plantations in Aceh Tamiang can also be an ethnically integrated palm oil area. This is because Aceh Tamiang is predominantly Malay. In addition, this area is also close to the border, which, since the Dutch colonial era, has been visited by many immigrant Dutch East Indies plantation workers. This reality was also the reason why the central government chose Aceh Tamiang as the compensation area for oil palm plantations for DI/TII troops.

Release of Company's HGU Area as Agricultural Area

Releasing the HGU area is an unusual action for the corporate elite in many countries. However, unlike the former DI/TII oil palm company, which released part of the Plantation Area to become an agricultural area for the

³⁴ Brian D Fath, "Quantifying Economic and Ecological Sustainability," *Ocean & Coastal Management* 108 (2015), p. 13–19.

community and workers, it has had a positive impact on rice farmers, such as developing agricultural technology, increasing productivity, and improving farmer welfare in Aceh Tamiang District. The corporation purposely releases HGU in order to preserve a balance between itself and the surrounding community. This positive influence also improves worker welfare by providing space for private farming, allowing farmers to fulfil their demands. This farming region is cooperatively managed by local farmers and Company employees.

In many studies, it is mentioned that some of the social impacts of the presence of oil palm plantations are as follows: Firstly, the displacement of residential areas by oil palm plantations often results in the eviction of local communities and the destruction of traditional settlements. This can lead to social conflict, reduced quality of life, and economic losses for the affected communities. Secondly, economic inequality in the palm oil industry can create economic disparities within communities. Plantation owners and large companies usually benefit more than agricultural workers and smallholders. Thirdly, increased migrant labour: oil palm plantations often use migrant labourers who work in conditions that are not always decent, at low wages, and often in unsafe circumstances. Lastly, declining community health: waste from oil palm plantations, such as pesticide waste and wastewater, can contaminate water and soil, negatively impacting the health of communities living around plantations.

Meanwhile, one of the most prominent environmental effects of oil palm farms is deforestation. Tropical rainforests are frequently cleared to make way for plantations, resulting in the loss of natural habitat for several plant and animal species, including endangered species. Second, deforestation and the conversion of natural forests to oil palm farms have the potential to reduce biodiversity significantly. Many indigenous and rare species threaten extinction owing to habitat destruction. Third, the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers in oil palm plantations pollutes soil and water, disrupts natural ecosystems, and influences water quality and aquatic ecosystem health. Finally, burning forests to clear land for oil palm plantations increases greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to global climate change.

Governments and the palm oil industry have endeavoured to reduce adverse social and ecological impacts through regulations and sustainable practices such as RSPO (*Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil*) certification. Nonetheless, many challenges remain to be overcome to minimise the industry's negative impacts. Increased transparency, sustainable management, and engagement with local communities can help reduce the social and ecological effects of oil palm plantations.

Conflict Resolution through Oil Palm Plantations: A Legal Sociology Perspective

According to data collected in the field, until now, no definite data has been obtained on the total area of former-DI/TII oil palm plantations in Aceh Tamiang. However, if calculated, the plantation area of the two companies is 9,732, 33 Ha. The plantations are located at the end of the border between Aceh and North Sumatra Provinces. The area of plantation land in Aceh Province reaches 6,678.76 Ha, and in North Sumatra Province, it is 3,053.57 Ha. Tamiang Regency has a majority of people of Malay ethnicity, while Langkat Regency has a majority of Javanese ethnicity. Cultural differences certainly affect the dynamics of the plantation company's journey. Oil palm plantations have significant social and ecological impacts, especially in countries where oil palm is widely grown, such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

The oil palm development in Indonesia has caused at least some deforestation, resulting in significant secondary external impacts such as water pollution, soil erosion and air pollution. In terms of the social effects, there are many stakeholder groups, namely employees, farmers, and household investors. However, it's not just impact; palm oil also has economic benefits that are equitably distributed. Economic benefits are gained at the expense of a weak rule of law. To mitigate the negative impacts and trade-offs of oil palm plantations and maximise their economic potential, government decision-makers need to limit the use of forest land for plantation development by enforcing the implementation of regulations.³⁵

The existence of ex-DI/TII oil palm plantations in Aceh Tamiang has significant implications when viewed from a legal theological perspective on the socio-economic peace of the community and the environment. It affects various aspects of community and labour life. Oil palm plantations have emerged as a dominant force in many regions, providing a major source of livelihood and income.³⁶ Some forms of social peace between the Company and the community occur through licencing freelance livestock for the Community and Farm Workers in the oil palm Plantation area. The existence of oil palm plantations can provide economic opportunities for local communities by allowing freelance livestock on land that is not used for plantations. This can increase community income and diversify livelihoods.

The history of DI/TII oil palm was told by old people who were involved in land concessions that they got land from rubber plantations from the Netherlands (initially not from Palm Oil). However, when President Soekarno

³⁵ Obidzinski, et. al., "Environmental and Social Impacts of Oil Palm Plantations and Their Implications for Biofuel Production in Indonesia."

³⁶ S Wulandari, et.al., "Dominance of Palm Oil Plantation Utilization on Peatlands in Riau Province," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 1230 (IOP Publishing, 2023).

implemented the policy of land nationalization on figures and members of the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia/PNI*) throughout Indonesia, including in Aceh. PNI is a party with a Nationalist ideology which was formed by Soekarno on July 4 1927. At that time there were also two figures from Aceh, namely Mr. Sati and Mr. Basyah. In 1976 this was converted to oil palm. The history of changing rubber plantations to oil palm began with credit assistance from the World Bank in 1973 through PT. Asuransi Bumi Putra.³⁷ This concession clearly had a good economic and social impact on the community at that time.

In the subsequent period after independence and reform, especially after the 2005 Helsinki peace agreement, namely concessions to 1,500 former GAM members with the aim of socio-economic empowerment of the community. Then at this time the Governor has agreed to be given 2 hectares of land each, which amounts to around 3000 hectares. This policy is possible because it is included in Indonesia's National Strategy Program (*Proyek Strategi Nasional/PSN*).³⁸

The social relationship between workers and oil palm plantation companies can bring benefits in the form of employment and income for neighbouring communities. This economic prosperity can strengthen the social relationship between workers and the company. This creates a harmonious relationship between workers and the company. Companies with good management practices, including policies that support workers' welfare and open communication, can create peace and harmony between workers and companies.³⁹ This is important for maintaining the sustainability of plantation operations and social peace between companies and workers.

Its presence in Aceh Tamiang has resulted in economic landscape changes that do not pose a threat to rural inhabitants' livelihoods. For this reason, strengthening populist policies and regulations attributed to oil palm at the local level needs to be encouraged. Specifically, policies that focus on sustainable management, legal certainty, environmental protection, and maximizing oil palm farmers' productivity.⁴⁰ Thus, concerns that oil palm plantation expansion contributes to worsening social inequality can be minimised. In addition, strong regulations are also needed to harmonise plantation development in accordance with the constitutional mandate for the prosperity of the people.⁴¹ Finally, the

³⁷Interview with Hamdan Sati, Aceh Taming Community Leader, July 21, 2023.

³⁸ Interview with Datuk Fadlan, *Datok/Head Village*, Aceh Tamiang, July 21, 2023.

³⁹ Efendi Efendi, et. al., "Animal Protection in the Perspective of Positive Law and Islamic Law: A Study of Elephant-Human Conflict in Aceh, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 1 (2023), p. 175–194.

⁴⁰ Almasdi Syahza, et.al., "Strengthening Riau Province's Oil Palm Policy Based on Strengthening Local Institutions in Riau Province Bengkalis," *KnE Social Sciences*, (2023), p. 447–462.

⁴¹ Hayatul Ismi and Yeni Kusumawaty, "Conflict Management Policy on Oil Palm Plantations in Riau Province: Islamic Review," *Islamic Research* 5, no. 2 (2022), p. 185–193.

existence of oil palm plantations must consider the legal framework, governance structure and sustainability measures to ensure harmonious coexistence between plantations, society and the environment as part of the implementation of conflict resolution and peace building that can be achieved in Taming and Aceh as a whole.

Conclusion

The conflict transformation of Aceh's Darul Islam movement involved ex-combatants reintegration into civil society, focusing on social, economic and political aspects. This process included economic empowerment, particularly through an oil palm plantation programme, to create peace and economic prosperity in Aceh. The central government engaged in diplomacy with former DI/TII elites to maintain peace, involving them in developing oil palm plantations. This effort is expected to not only defuse the conflict but also increase the sustainability of peace in Aceh. Meanwhile, conflict transformation not only ensures long-term peace and financial prosperity for ex-combatants but also promotes ecological sustainability by releasing green land from ex-DI/TII Oil Palm Companies and reducing the negative impacts of oil palm plantations. The company strives to maintain a balance between economic benefits and environmental sustainability, including involving local communities in land management. In addition, the company also released the HGU area of the plantation as an agricultural area for the community and company workers, which is a rare step taken by oil palm companies. Efforts to reduce negative impacts through sustainable practices and RSPO certification. However, challenges remain in minimising these impacts. The presence of ex-DI/TII oil palm plantations in Aceh Tamiang also has a positive effect on the social and economic peace of the community through freelance cattle permits, which harmonise relations between workers and companies. Overall, conflict transformation, economic empowerment, environmental conservation and harmonisation of social relations are key elements in building peace and sustainability in Aceh.

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