

Various Efforts to Resolve Conflicts in Oil Palm Plantations in Riau: A Case Study of PTPN V and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group

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ABSTRACT

This study examines efforts to resolve tenure conflicts in oil palm plantations in Riau Province, with a focus on case studies on PTPN V and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group. Using a qualitative approach based on literature studies, data were collected from various relevant secondary sources and published in the time frame 2010–2024. This study aims to identify the root causes of conflicts, the actors involved, and the resolution strategies used. The results show that the conflict is triggered by overlapping claims on customary land and unclear Right to Use (HGU). The most effective conflict resolution involves participatory mediation between indigenous peoples, companies, and governments, as well as the support of independent institutions such as Komnas HAM and professional appraisals. Legal recognition of customary lands and the involvement of customary institutions are also key in building trust and reaching agreements. This study has limitations because it only uses a literature study without field verification. Therefore, further research with a qualitative field approach is recommended to strengthen the findings and understand local dynamics in more depth.

Keywords: palm oil, participatory mediation, PTPN V, Salim Ivomas, tenure conflict, Riau

ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengkaji upaya penyelesaian konflik tenurial di perkebunan kelapa sawit di Provinsi Riau, dengan studi kasus yang berfokus pada PTPN V dan PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berdasarkan studi pustaka, data dikumpulkan dari berbagai sumber sekunder relevan yang dipublikasikan pada periode 2010–2024. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi akar penyebab konflik, aktor yang terlibat, dan strategi penyelesaian yang digunakan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konflik tersebut dipicu oleh tumpang tindihnya klaim atas tanah adat dan Hak Guna Tanah (HGU) yang tidak jelas. Penyelesaian konflik yang paling efektif melibatkan mediasi partisipatif antara masyarakat adat, perusahaan, dan pemerintah, serta dukungan dari lembaga independen seperti Komnas HAM dan penilai profesional. Pengakuan hukum atas tanah adat dan keterlibatan lembaga adat juga merupakan kunci untuk membangun kepercayaan dan mencapai kesepakatan. Penelitian ini memiliki keterbatasan karena hanya menggunakan studi pustaka tanpa verifikasi lapangan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian lebih lanjut direkomendasikan dengan pendekatan lapangan kualitatif untuk memperkuat temuan dan memahami dinamika lokal secara lebih mendalam.

Kata kunci: Kepemilikan Lahan Hutan, Masyarakat Lokal, Potensi Konflik

INTRODUCTION

Riau is the province with the highest number of tenure conflicts in Indonesia, especially related to oil palm plantations. These conflicts generally involve indigenous peoples, local farmers, cooperatives, and large companies such as PTPN V and PT Salim

Ivomas Pratama Group. Kampar and Pelalawan Regencies are recorded as the areas with the highest number of conflict complaints. The two palm oil companies have been repeatedly linked to disputes related to land ownership or use claims between companies and local communities, including cooperatives and indigenous peoples (Belantaranews, 2023).

PTPN V, which has now changed to PTPN IV Regional III, is one of the companies that is most often in the spotlight in tenure conflicts in Riau. The protracted dispute with the indigenous people of Pantai Raja in Kampar, who are demanding the return of customary land used for PIR Trans's core plantations, reflects the complexity of unresolved agrarian issues. In addition, conflicts with indigenous peoples in Senama Nenek Village, Kampar, also emerged due to the granting of Business Use Rights (HGU) on land claimed as customary land, and the settlement sought since 2007 has not shown significant results (Shani *et al.*, 2024). On the other hand, PTPN V is also involved in a conflict with the Makmur Oil Palm Farmers Producers Cooperative regarding management rights and alleged manipulation of documents that have an impact on the welfare of plasma farmers.

PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group is also facing tensions with the community in Rokan Hilir due to demands for plasma rights that are considered to be neglected. Citizen protests and mediation efforts have been carried out repeatedly, but have not resulted in a satisfactory agreement, so tensions continue (Riauaktual, 2024). Unfortunately, studies on conflict resolution that focus on a community-based approach in these companies are still very limited. Previous studies tend to only review the legal aspects or chronology of conflict. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze tenure conflict resolution efforts in the case of PTPN V and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group in Riau Province, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of the approach applied to reduce conflicts and achieve a fair settlement for all parties.

This research makes a new contribution by highlighting specifically the community-based tenure conflict resolution approach applied to two large companies in the oil palm plantation sector in Riau, namely PTPN V and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group. In contrast to previous studies that tended to focus on legal-formal aspects or macro policies (Rachman, 2021; Prabowo *et al.*, 2022), this study emphasizes the

importance of participatory mediation and strengthening local institutions in the conflict resolution process. In addition, this study integrates socio-cultural dimensions, such as the role of customary institutions and the legitimacy of customary lands, which are often overlooked in formal approaches. By combining conflict analysis from the perspective of grassroots communities and corporate practices, this research enriches the understanding of inclusive and contextual resolution strategies at the site level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to explore the dynamics of tenure conflicts in the oil palm plantation sector, especially in Riau Province. The main focus of this study is to understand how tenure conflicts arise and how various parties try to resolve them, especially in the context of large companies such as PTPN V and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group. This research aims to explore the conflict resolution practices that have been carried out, the challenges faced, and the effectiveness of these approaches in achieving social justice and sustainability. Therefore, the data used is secondary data sourced from various academic publications and reports from trusted institutions.

Data sources were collected from various scientific literature search platforms such as *Google Scholar*, *Garuda*, and *ScienceDirect*. The publications studied were limited to a time span between 2015 and 2024 in order to obtain up-to-date and contextual data. The inclusion criteria used in the literature selection include: (1) articles that explicitly discuss land conflicts, tenure conflicts, or conflict resolution in the oil palm plantation sector; (2) articles available in *full-text format*; and (3) articles that raise case studies from Indonesia, especially Riau Province. Conversely, articles that are not relevant to the theme of tenure conflicts, do not contain a conflict resolution approach, or do not go through a peer-review process are excluded from the study material.

In analyzing the data, this study uses thematic analysis techniques. This technique is done by identifying, grouping, and interpreting the main themes of the collected literature. Some of the important themes analyzed include: actors involved in conflicts (such as indigenous peoples, cooperatives, companies, and governments), the causes of conflict (e.g. HGU disputes, unclear territorial boundaries, or land grabbing), the forms of

conflict that occur (both open and latent conflicts), and conflict resolution strategies applied by each party. With this approach, it is hoped that the research will be able to present a comprehensive picture of the complexity of tenure conflicts in Riau and offer input for a fairer and more sustainable resolution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General Context of Tenure Conflicts in Indonesia

Forests in Indonesia have a strategic role in the welfare of the community, as mandated by Article 33 Paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution, but the massive conversion of functions, especially for oil palm plantations, has led to significant deforestation, which has triggered tenure conflicts (Abdussamad *et al.*, 2024). A similar phenomenon has also been found in Riau, where the conversion of forest land into plantations creates a sharp inequality in land ownership, especially for indigenous peoples and local farmers (Fitriana *et al.*, 2013). This shift in function weakens access to natural resources, triggers social resistance, and opens up opportunities for horizontal conflicts—between companies, communities, and governments (Afrizal *et al.*, 2024). Riau's specific literature shows land conflicts because HGUs do not involve local communities, resulting in prolonged disputes (Utari *et al.*, 2021). Thus, an understanding of this context shows the urgency of a more inclusive and responsive resolution approach to local complexity.

2. Actors Involved in the Conflict

Tenure conflicts in Riau involve various actors with different interests, namely large companies such as PTPN V and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Group, which have HGUs over the land where the conflict is located. The indigenous people of Senama Nenek and Pantai Raja villages maintain access to customary land for generations, while farmer cooperatives such as the Makmur Oil Palm Farmers Producers Cooperative play a role in fighting for local economic interests. Local and national governments carry out the role of legal, regulatory, and conflict mediation instruments, sometimes intersecting with community demands for natural resource rights (Dini *et al.*, 2024). Independent institutions such as Komnas HAM and the Riau Malay Customary Institute (LAMR) also play a neutral role as mediators, contributing to providing cultural legitimacy and protection of customary rights (Tsurayya *et al.*, 2023). This combination of actors reflects the complexity of power relations and socio-cultural

legitimacy in Riau's tenure conflict.

3. Causes of Conflict

One of the main causes of conflict in Riau is the overlapping claims of customary land claimed by indigenous peoples with HGUs issued by companies without adequate consultation (Kausar *et al.*, 2023). The HGU licensing process is often disrupted due to unclear land legal status and manipulation of documents such as SKT, which are vulnerable to being used by companies to trade land before legal certainty is provided (Afrizal *et al.*, 2024). In addition, community participation in the planning or compensation of plasma plantations is often ignored, leading to an inequality in the distribution of economic benefits (Utari *et al.*, 2021). The lack of transparency and accountability makes society resistant to corporate policies, which ultimately encourages the escalation of conflict through protests and formal customary rights claims.

4. Conflict Resolution Strategy

a. Community-Based Approach

Participatory mediation in Senama Nenek Village shows effectiveness when indigenous peoples, local governments (village heads to regents), and customary institutions participate in formulating solutions based on Regional Regulation No. 12 of 1999 (Dini *et al.*, 2024). Citizen involvement in land mapping meetings, reconciliation of social values, and cultural legitimacy are key tools in building sustainable agreements. This model encourages recognition of local governance thereby increasing a sense of belonging and preventing recurring conflicts.

b. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The company adopted a CSR scheme involving agricultural training, employment opportunities in plasma plantations, and the provision of health facilities and infrastructure in an effort to improve relations with the local community. This approach represents a shift from a paternalistic model to a socio-economic partnership model, and when accompanied by fair compensation, has been shown to dampen local tensions.

c. Mediation and Government Support

Formal mediation facilitated by the government through the TORA program involves independent parties, such as professional appraisals and Komnas

HAM, in determining compensation and land restitution, as happened in Senama Nenek Village (Tsurayya et al., 2023). The participation of the central government - especially through the President and related ministries - provides political pressure that accelerates conflict resolution, while also giving legal legitimacy to the resulting agreements.

5. Challenges and Recommendations

Although various strategies have been implemented, the realization of agreements on the ground still faces obstacles related to the monitoring and coordination mechanisms between actors. Local governments need to establish independent monitoring teams involving academics, NGOs, and the community, to monitor the implementation of agreements in real time (Yuslaini Maulidiah, 2023). Public transparency regarding the content and status of agreements needs to be increased through open portals or reports to maintain accountability. In addition, there is a need for capacity training for traditional leaders and village officials to be more able to carry out mediation functions independently

Table 1. Summary of Tenure Conflicts in Riau

Yes	Location/Case	Main Actors	Causes of Conflict	Solution/Handling
1	Senama Nenek Village, Kampar	Customary Person vs PTPN V	Claim on customary land, unilateral HGU	Mediation, land restitution through the TORA program
2	Raja Beach, Kampar	Customary Person vs PTPN V	PIR Trans land exploitation without customary approval	Legal lawsuits, advocacy by traditional leaders
3	Rokan Hilir	Customary Relations vs PT Salim Ivomas	Plasma is not given, minimal CSR	Protest action, mediation by the local government (not yet completed)
4	Prosperous Palm Oil Cooperative	Customary Courts vs PTPN V (PTPN V Reg. III)	Alleged document manipulation & mismanagement	Negotiations, no final settlement

CONCLUSION

Resolving tenure conflicts in Riau oil palm plantations can be done through a community-based approach, mediation involving the government and independent parties, and legal recognition of customary rights. The success of conflict resolution is highly dependent on the commitment of all parties to implement the agreement in a transparent, inclusive, and sustainable manner for the creation of harmonious social and environmental justice. This study has limitations in the literature study method that does not involve direct field verification. Therefore, follow-up studies with a qualitative field approach are highly recommended to strengthen the findings, explore the perceptions of local actors more deeply, and evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies at the site level.

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