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## Hartati Murdaya's Powers in the Forestry Business

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**TEMPO Interactive, Jakarta:** Hartati Murdaya, a businesswoman currently linked by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to a bribery scandal involving Buol Regent Amran Batalipu, is known as an astute politician and a top businesswoman. She contributed much to Yudhoyono's campaign team. For nearly three months Yudhoyono worked from her offices.

Her powers are reflected, for instance, in a letter sent off to former Forestry Minister Malem Sambat Kaban, seven years ago. Delivered to his offices on the fourth floor of Manggala Wanabakti Building, Forestry Ministry, the letter was signed by Cabinet Secretary Sudi Silalahi.

In the letter Number B.353/Seskab/10/2005, Sudi wrote for PT Intracawood Manufacturing "not to be reviewed, provided it contains the truth in accordance with the legislation". Intracawood, owned by businesswoman Siti Hartati Tjakra Murdaya, had a forest concession in East Kalimantan. As Minister of Forestry, Kaban had planned to revoke it.

Before Sudi wrote Kaban, Hartati Murdaya came to Manggala Building often. "But I didn't not want to meet her," said Kaban, on Thursday last week. At other times, the person who would lobby Kaban in her place was Totok Lestiyo, Director of PT Inti Hardaya Plantations, another of Hartati's companies. Kaban said he ignored the lobbying efforts.

Having failed to approach Kaban, Hartati wrote to Sudi on July 12, 2005. In the letter Number 03/SHM/Leg/VII/05, she asked Sudi to prevent the the Forestry Minister from revoking Intracawood's permit. On October 6, 2005, Sudi Hartati forwarded the message to Kaban.

When Kaban left Mangalla, the permit had not been revoked. According to him, it was not because of Sudi's letter, but because the law enforcement did not take any action against the alleged procedural error in the permit issuance by the previous Ministry of Forestry. For allegedly harming the country, the case had actually been reported to the Attorney General's Office. " Pak Sudi's mail was nothing out of the ordinary," Kaban explained.

To Tempo, Hartati once said she wrote to Sudi as she would a fellow graduate of the National Resilience Council (Lemhanas). Both are listed as alumni of the Council's Short Course IX in 1999. On one occasion Sudi stated that all he did was forwarded Hartati's letter to the Forestry Minister.

Not only did both graduate from Lemhanas, Hartati and Sudi had another thing in common: President Susilo Bambang

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Yudhoyono. Both were people who were there for Yudhoyono when he was facing "tough" times. Hartati's close proximity with Yudhoyono was exposed at least in 2001, when Yudhoyono was ousted from the post of Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs by President Abdurrahman Wahid. The wife of businessman Widyawimarta Murdaya Poo provided a room on the 8th floor of CCM Building, Jalan Cikini Raya, Central Jakarta, the headquarters of PT Central Cipta Murdaya, her business group. For nearly three months Yudhoyono had his offices there.

In the bribery case of the oil palm plantation in Buol, KPK has named Buol Regent Amran Batalipu as suspect for allegedly taking bribes from Hartati's company. Amran is suspected of allegedly receiving Rp3 billion.

Hartati has denied bribing the Buol Regent. "I can only explain based on my job as president director. Do I really look to you like the type who would bribe?" she asked.  
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