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KPK works to determine Hartati's complicity in bribery

Rangga D. Fadillah, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta | National | Mon, August 06 2012, 8:00 AM

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The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) is hunting for more evidence to prove the involvement of Democratic Party politician and businesswoman Hartati Murdaya in a bribery scandal involving her company's top executives and Amran Batalipu, the regent of Buol in Central Sulawesi.

KPK chairman Abraham Samad said that Hartati had not "officially" been named a suspect in the case, but investigators had stepped up efforts to establish whether she had played a significant role in the case.

"Our investigators are still looking into it [the role of Hartati] and as for her status, our spokesman will make the announcement when the time is right," Abraham said.

Responding to the KPK's move, Hartati's attorney, Patra M. Zen, said that his client remained a witness in the case and that he was not aware of the possibility that the KPK would name her a suspect soon.

"It's not true [that Hartati had been named a suspect]," he told The Jakarta Post via text message.

KPK spokesman Johan Budi confirmed that Hartati remained a witness in the case.

"We have not made any new additions to the number of suspects in the Buol case," Johan said.

So far, the KPK has named three suspects in the bribery scandal: Yani Anshori, general manager of PT Hardaya Inti Plantations; Gondo Sujono, operations director of PT Hardaya Inti Plantations and Amran himself.

The Law and Human Rights Ministry's immigration office has slapped travel bans on Hartati, Totok Lestiyono, Sukirno, Kirana Wijaya, Benhard (all from PT Hardaya Inti Plantations), Serf Sirithorn and Arim.

Hartati's team of attorneys earlier said that her company, PT Hardaya Inti Plantations (HIP), was extorted by Amran to give Rp 3 billion (around US\$316,589). The company only agreed to give Rp 1 billion.

Amran's lawyer, Amat Entedaim, rejected the extortion claim, saying that representatives from HIP had made the proposal to Amran.

Amat said that if Amran had meant to extort HIP's executives, he would have gone to meet them.

He also claimed that the Rp 2 billion from HIP was a campaign donation for Amran's reelection bid.

"We learned that Bu Murdaya gave money not only to Amran, but also to other candidates contesting regional elections in places where she has

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assets, not only in Buol, to secure her interests," he said.

The KPK investigators are now investigating a wiretapped conversation between Hartati and Amran.

The recording is said to contain Hartati's request for Amran to expedite the granting of a business permit to her palm oil plantation company.

The KPK has also expanded its probe into the graft case by questioning Artalyta "Ayin" Suryani to obtain details about her connections with PT Sonokeling Buana, which controls a 19,500-hectare palm oil plantation in Buol regency, Central Sulawesi, adjacent to HIP's site. Investigators deemed Artalyta an important witness in the case.



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