



Wadas' 'Paradise Land' Becomes a Mine: 'Why is the Government Oppressing Farmers?'



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A man looks at various kinds of productive plants owned by farmers covering a hill in Wadas Village, Purworejo, Central Java. (Project M/Bambang Muryanto)

A pair of eagles flies circling over a hill in Wadas Village, Purworejo, Central Java, which is densely covered with durian, sugar palm, mahogany,





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of palm trees, cubeb and vanilla plants grow. Meanwhile, the forest floor is a place for shrubs, vegetables and spice plants such as ginger and galangal to grow.

For generations, the village residents, almost all of whom are farmers, have carried out multicultural farming (various types of crops) on their fertile land on the hill. This system allows farmers to earn income from harvesting various crops alternately throughout the year.

The hill in Wadas provides so many benefits that residents call it "the land of heaven on earth in Wadas". Residents say their lives are sufficient from nature in this "land of paradise".

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the Wadas durian is one that is sought after because it has soft flesh, is sticky and sweet and appetizing.

"If the harvest is good, one large durian tree can produce IDR 10 million. "I have 10 trees, so I can get IDR 100 million," said *Mbah* Marsono, Sunday (8/5).

The 62 year old grandfather built a green painted prayer room measuring around 5 x 6 meters in front of his house. Marsono purposely built the prayer room for his neighbors. The construction costs used his own money, the results of his hard work farming. Every day, *Mbah* Marsono taps the sap of his rubber trees, one kilogram of rubber sap costs Rp. 7,000

Previously, while exploring the hills, I met Suroso who had a house on the ridge. His house is in the highest position because the houses of other Wadas residents are built at the foot of the hill, not far from the main road that divides the village.

He showed his cubeba plant (*Piper cubeba*) which was climbing on a tree trunk in front of his house. Cube fruit or Javanese pepper can be used as a cooking spice or the oil can be extracted from it.





WHEN THE HARVEST SEASON ARRIVES, SUROSO CAN GET between 20 and 30 kilograms of wet cubeb fruit. After drying, 3 kilograms of wet cubeb fruit shrinks to 1 kilogram. If Suroso can harvest 30 kilograms and sell it dry, he will earn IDR 2.5 million in income.



Suroso shows cubeb, one of the economically valuable plants that many farmers plant on the hills of Wadas Village. (Project M/Bambang Muryanto)

In a survey of economic potential carried out by the Wadas Village Nature Care Community Movement (Gempa Dewa) together with the Yogyakarta Forum for the Environment (Walhi), the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH), and the Street Library, all the plants cultivated on the hill have a high accumulated value per year : petai reached IDR 241 million,





The hill in Wadas provides so many benefits that residents call it "the land of heaven on earth in Wadas". Residents say their lives are sufficient from nature in this "land of paradise".

But now the lives of farmers are being disrupted because the government is trying to take away their livelihoods. The government through the Serayu Opak River Area Center (BBWSSO) of the Directorate General of Water Resources, Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (PUPR) is building the Bener Dam in Guntur Village, Purworejo Regency, Central Java. The plan is for the stone material for the construction of the dam to be taken from the "belly" of the hill in Wadas with an affected land area of 114 hectares.

The location of Bener Dam is approximately 10.5 kilometers west of Wadas. A road will be made for trucks to transport soil from Wadas to the Bener Dam location.

Bener Dam's Chief Commitment Making Officer (PPK), M. Yushar, said that the hill in Wadas holds 40 million cubic meters of andesite. But only 8.5 million cubic meters were taken over two to three






was designated as a plantation area.

“The hills in Wadas were chosen because the stones meet technical specifications such as hardness and shear angles. "The volume is the most adequate and the distance to the Bener Dam is the most ideal," he said, Thursday (20/5).

He said land owners on the hill would receive a "profit compensation" of at least IDR 120,000 per square meter. After that, the land was controlled by the government, but after restoration, the community could use it again through an agreement between the Village-Owned Enterprise (Bumdes) and BBWSSO.

'TANAH SURGA' WADAS TERANCAM JADI TAMBANG BATU

Nilai akumulasi tanaman budidaya warga di Wadas per tahun:

	Kayu sengon Rp 2 milyar		Kemulus Rp 1,35 milyar
	Petai mencapai Rp 241 juta		Vanili Rp 266 juta
	Durian Rp 1,24 milyar		

12 jenis burung belum termasuk elang:

Walet Sapi	Cekak Gunung	Kleci	Kutilang
Madu Kelapa			Tekukur
Bondol Haji			Trocokan
Blekok Sawah	Pipit	Prenjak Jawa	Prenjak Sisi Merah



Catatan: Burung elang tidak dimasukkan dalam jenis burung di Wadas dalam Amdal Bendungan Bener, padahal elang ada di sana dan statusnya masuk dalam satwa langka yang dilindungi.
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ANCAMAN TAMBANG BATU

-  Tambang batu andesit di Wadas untuk kepentingan pembangunan Bendungan Bener.
-  Tambang batu tidak memiliki Amdal sendiri melainkan digabung dengan Amdal bendungan.
-  Penambangan batu dilakukan di bukit yang hijau penuh dengan tegakan pepohonan besar.

Sumber: Survei ekonomi Gerakan Masyarakat Peduli Alam Desa Wadas (Gempa Dewa), Walihi Yogyakarta, LBH Yogyakarta dan Perpuastakan Jalanan tahun 2018-2019, Amdal Bendungan Bener, Keperantasan Project Multatuli





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Project (PSN), which costs IDR 2.06 trillion, can accommodate 90.39 million cubic meters of water which inundates 313 hectares of land in four villages in Purworejo Regency and three villages in Wonosobo Regency.





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Bendungan di Indonesia, yakni Bendungan Bener akan menjadi bendungan tertinggi di Indonesia. Bendungan ini terletak di Purworejo, Jawa Tengah.

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Coordinating Board (BKPM), 31 March 2020 stated that the Bener Dam is capable of irrigating 15,519 hectares of rice fields and reducing The flood discharge is 210 liters/second, supplies raw water as much as 1,500 liters/second, and is a source of hydroelectric power (PLTA) with a capacity of 6 Mega Watt (MW).

Of the 1,500 liters/second raw water supply for clean water, the largest portion or 700 liters per second will be channeled to Kulon Progo Regency. The remaining 300 liters are for Kebumen Regency and 500 liters for Purworejo Regency. Of the 700 liters for Kulon Progo, 200 liters are devoted to Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA), a PSN to support tourism and economic activities in Yogyakarta and Central Java which was built by moving farmers who use fertile coastal land to other land. Some of the displaced residents called this action "forced eviction".

The Yogyakarta provincial government has planned to develop YIA into an "aetropolis" area of 7,000 hectares

(<https://bisnis.tempo.co/read/1244637/yogya-mulai-siapkan-kawasan-aerotropolis-pendukung-bandara-yia/full&view=ok>) which will become the





selatan-jawa) . In late December 2019, the head of the Kulon Progo Bappeda, Agus Langgeng Basuki, said that the YIA "aetropolis" radius would be widened to 15 kilometers (<https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2019/12/29/radius-kawasan-aerotropolis-diperluas-jadi-15-kilometer?page=2>) from the airport. "This development is to attract investment and economic growth in Kulon Progo," said Agus. In this area there will be a trade, logistics and residential center. In fact, there will also be a helipad in this "aetropolis".



'If the land is lost, what will you do?'

Wadas Village residents began to hear that their village had been affected by the construction of the Bener Dam since 2013. Wadas Village leader, Insin





their village. They expressed their stance when BBWSSO held a socialization on quarry mining at the Wadas Village Hall.

“We are 99 percent farmers, if the land is lost, what will we do? "This land is a support for life now and for future children and grandchildren," he said.



Two children playing bicycles on the streets of Wadas Village. Their future is threatened by stone mining for the Bener Dam project. (Project M/Dhoni Setiawan)

Despite the residents' rejection, the Amdal for the construction of the Bener Dam, which includes quarry mining in Wadas, was passed in March 2018. The document does not mention the rejection of the Wadas Village residents at all.





the Construction of the Bener Dam in Purworejo Regency and Wonosobo Regency. This Location Determination Permit (IPL) has been extended once and will end on June 5.

Regarding the issue of passing the Amdal despite the residents' rejection, the head of PPK Yushar admitted that he had held socialization involving elements of society such as the Chair of the Village Representative Body (BPD) and the Head of Wadas Village, the Head of Bener Subdistrict, community leaders and several residents who were able to come. In the Amdal document, this activity was carried out at the house of the Head of Wadas Village, 7 August 2017.

"We also distributed surveys for the UKL/UPL Amdal Bener Dam. "This survey proves that residents agree, but over time there are individuals who provoke them to refuse," he said.

Yushar said that in 2019-2020 the composition of residents who rejected and agreed to quarry mining was balanced, now around 70 percent have agreed. BBWSSO asks residents who agree (who are





"Now 313 plots of land have been collected and only 100 plots have been authorized by LBH Yogyakarta because they refused," he added.

However, the Head of the Advocacy Division of LBH Yogyakarta, Julian Duwi Prasetya, who has been the attorney for Wadas residents since October 2018, said that the majority of Wadas residents still reject quarry mining. There were 300 people who gave authority to LBH Yogyakarta to reject quarry mining.

Amdal 'Defective in Substance and Procedure'

According to Julian, the absence of records of local residents' opposition to mining in Wadas in the Bener Dam Amdal is very worrying. As far as he knows, residents have been actively rejecting it since 2016 or 2017.

"The AMDAL is flawed in substance and procedure," he stressed.

Julian also saw that the community involvement process in Wadas Village to prepare the Wadas Dam Amdal was not in accordance with the Republic of Indonesia Minister of Environment Regulation No.





2012-

[Permen_LH_17_th_2012_Keterlibatan_masyarakat.pdf](#)

concerning Guidelines for Community Involvement in the Environmental Impact Analysis and Environmental Permit Process. Community involvement must involve affected residents, environmental observers and residents who are affected by all Amdal decisions, not village officials who are easily "conditioned".

"This is a bad precedent, if someone wants to build a toll road that requires cement, the toll road EIA and limestone mining to produce cement will be one," said Julian.

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If the community involved in the Amdal preparation process is a representative, the mechanism must be through community deliberation first. He also did





quarry mining should be separated because they are different types of activities. The process mechanism for obtaining a mining permit is also different from an infrastructure development permit.

"This is a bad precedent, if someone wants to build a toll road that requires cement, the toll road EIA and limestone mining to produce cement will be one," he said.

But Yushar has a different opinion, one Amdal is enough because dam construction and quarry mining are one unit and the process is similar. When building a dam there is an excavation process (to find the strongest rock structure as a basis for building a foundation), exactly the same as excavation in quarry mining.

The Bener Dam Amdal noted that there are 12 living birds that will be affected by activities at the construction site. But unfortunately we failed to note the presence of eagles. Every morning before noon, this protected raptor always flies over the hill in Wadas looking for prey.

Since the publication of the Bener Bendungan Amdal, March 2018, which listed Wadas Village as a quarry mining site, the struggle of Wadas residents





Since then, Wadas residents have actively held protests at various government institutions such as BBWSSO, Purworejo Regent, Purworejo Police, Purworejo BPN Office, and the Central Java Governor's Office in Semarang. But their aspirations to cancel quarry mining in their village were not fulfilled.

The "culmination" of the Wadas residents' struggle occurred when they, spearheaded by Wadon Wadas, blocked the BBWSSO team from arriving at the Wadas Village Hall to carry out land clearing outreach, Friday (23/4). Since the morning after Wadon Wadas thwarted the installation of tents at the Wadas Village Hall, they closed the road and held mujahadah prayers, or prayers of struggle, on the road leading to the village.

Towards noon, police officers numbering around 400 people arrived and forced their way into Wadas Village, according to residents' testimonies. The chaos broke out after the police fired tear gas and dispersed the Wadon Wadas action to block the road.

(https://www.instagram.com/p/COAeU28HYcg/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)Nine





Director of LBH Yogyakarta, Yogi Zul Fadhli reported the case of violence committed by the police to Komnas HAM in Jakarta, Thursday (29/4). LBH Yogyakarta together with the Professional Advocates for Justice (PEKA) Defense Team also reported the Purworejo Police Chief to the Central Java Regional Police because police officers also committed violence against the legal defenders of Wadas residents, Julian and Lalu M. Salim Iling Jagat, Monday (3/5).

During the chaos at Wadas, a member of Wadon Wadas, Yatimah (50) fell when he and other Wadon Wadas members wanted to save a teenage boy who was arrested by the police. He admitted that he was brave enough to fight and face the police because he was defending his right to life which was threatened by quarry mining.

"We are fighting because women are the ones most affected if mining occurs," he said.

He said that quarry mining causes living arrangements to be destroyed and sources of clean water are lost. The land on the hill planted with





"We are not against government programs. "There's just one thing, we don't allow quarry mining in Wadas Village," added Yatimah.

We are Water Experts, Don't Worry: BBWSSO

Head of the Certain Non-Vertical Work Unit (SNVT) for Dam Construction, BBWSSO, Tampang, claims that quarry mining does not cause negative impacts such as landslides and loss of water springs. There are ways to overcome this.

"We are water experts, don't worry," he said.

He said that the quarry mining and processing location on the upper hill was barren land because it was rocky and only covered with bushes. But if you look at it on Google Map, the hill in Wadas is green, full of large stands of trees.

Tampang said that with "profit exchange," farmers can buy land in other locations and buy motorbikes or cars. According to him, this is an improvement.





The parabolic two-story house is visible in the residential area of Wadas Village which is located at the foot of the hill that will be mined. (Project M/Bambang Muryanto)

Yushar added that during the mining process, farmers whose land was taken also did not lose income because they could work on the project according to their skills. After restoration, the land is also returned and can be used according to their wishes through the cooperation mechanism of Bumdes Wadas and BBWSSO.

BBWSSO's promise of "profit" is the same as the government's promise to farmers on the coast of Kulon Progo Regency whose land was used to build YIA Airport. However, an evicted farmer, Ustadz Sofyan, has a testimony about how his fellow farmers live, who can also "replace profits".

"As far as I know, not all residents can buy agricultural land anymore. "There are those who can only rent land that is far from where they live," he





In the international world, the benefits of dams have begun to be questioned because construction and maintenance costs are very expensive, they damage the environment and social life, they are corrupt, the life of the buildings is shorter and they are not suitable for their original purpose due to the impact of climate change, and they only benefit contractors.

Liz Kimbrough in an article entitled "The Hidden Costs of Hydro: We Need to Reconsider the World's Dam Plans"

(<https://news.mongabay.com/2019/03/the-hidden-costs-of-hydro-we-need-to-reconsider-worlds-dam-plans/>) on the Mongabay.com website (March 5 2019) which quotes a study from Michigan State University published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS)

(<https://www.pnas.org/content/115/47/11891>) , stated that the costs or impacts of dams are often underestimated.

In Europe and the United States (US) there is a trend of destroying dams rather than building new ones. In the US alone, since 2006, every year an average of





Environmental journalist, Paul Brown, in a report entitled "[The unacceptable cost of big dams](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2000/nov/17/international)" in the Friday, 17 November 2000 edition of The Guardian also voiced the negative impacts of large dams. Quoting a statement [from the World Commission on Dams](http://www.damsreport.org/) (<http://www.damsreport.org/>) , approximately 45,000 large dams built throughout the world have had enormous detrimental impacts, harming poor groups and failing to provide electricity and irrigation supplies as planned.

But Tampang disagrees and says there are many benefits that can be gained from building the dam. "That's just casuistry," he said.

He ensured that construction of the Bener Dam would continue using andesite stone material from Wadas. The alternative of mining *quarries* from the surrounding villages as stated in the Bener Bendungan Amdal is not an option.





A motorbike rider passes a banner against stone mining, one of many put up by residents at several points in Wadas Village. (Project M/Dhoni Setiawan)

Sitting on his terrace, Marsono is confused by government policies that do not side with farmers. In fact, every 10 square meters of land on the hill in Wadas is a place where various plants can grow that can produce a lot of profit.

"They say the government wants to reduce poverty, why is it oppressing farmers and taking their land?"

The previous night, Marsono led prayer prayers for Wadas residents who held a mujahada in their prayer room. The strains of collective prayer that came from the mouths of hundreds of residents echoed into the air, blending with the dew that was starting to fall. They are pinning their hopes on the Creator being willing to thwart the quarry mining in Wadas Village.





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
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