

Victims call for reinvestigation of 1965 tragedy

JAK-POST - 23 Jan 18

The Jakarta Post

JAKARTA

Survivors of the 1965 communist purge, who join with the 1965 Murder Victims Research Foundation (YPKP 65), have for the umpteenth time urged the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) to push the government to reinvestigate the mass killings.

Accompanied by several fellow survivors, YPKP 65 chairman Bedjo Untung met the commission's leaders and asked them to take recent findings as additional evidence that may enable them to further investigate the anti-communist massacre.

"Komnas HAM has no more reason to delay completing their investigation into the tragedy," said Bedjo.

He referred to declassified United States documents on the 1965-1966 massacres that were made public in October last year and the hearing results of the International People's Tribunal in The Hague, which revealed the discovery of mass graves of victims of the 1965 tragedy.

The documents reveal that US diplomats in Jakarta and their State Department counterparts in Washington DC documented tens of thousands of killings committed by the military, paramilitary groups and Muslim militias against suspected members and sympathizers of the now-defunct Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) during 1965-1966.

Bedjo said along with the declassified US documents, the discovery of 162 graves across Java and Sumatra could also serve as

strong evidence to prove that the mass killings had truly happened in the country.

He suggested that related authorities use the bones of the deceased people to collect forensic data to support their investigation. They needed to dig up the victims from the mass graves so their bodies could be reburied properly, he went on.

During the administration of then president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in 2012, Komnas HAM's *pro justitia* investigation team presented a report on the 1965 killings to the Attorney General's Office (AGO). The report revealed serious crimes against humanity committed by the state, and recommended that the government compensate the victims and offer an apology. But the recommendations were never followed.

"Another *pro justitia* investigation team should be formed to probe the 1965 tragedy, especially on suspected supporters or sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party that had been imprisoned on Buru Island [in Maluku Islands]," said Bedjo.

On Buru, he further said, the team's members would get adequate data on the victims' imprisonment date, location and other administrative evidence because all of this information was well documented on the island.

Bedjo believed the investigation into the handling of 1965 victims on Buru Island would open the door to more findings on possible rights violations during the anti-communism campaign in other places across Indonesia. They include the suspected forced labor camp in Nusakam-

angan prison island in Cilacap, Central Java; Plantungan women's prison in Kendal, Central Java; Tangerang camp in Banten; Kalisosok prison in Surabaya, East Java and Kemarau Island in South Sumatra.

"This must start now to stop our 52 years of suffering, because to this day, we are still facing persecution and discrimination from both civil and military entities," said Bedjo.

Sudarno, 75, claimed that he and his family members in Pekalongan, Central Java, continued to receive routine visits from personnel of the local military command. On Nov. 23 last year, he said, his son, who resided near his house, was visited by several military personnel who told him they wanted to "update" their database on 1965 victims and their

families.

"Until one day in December, my son suddenly phoned me and told me that he and his family had moved from Pekalongan," said Sudarno.

"He said: 'I will always call you, Dad. It will be good for both of us if you do not know where I live right now'."

Sudarno said he and other 1965 victims had pinned their hopes on the newly inaugurated commissioners of Komnas HAM.

Komnas HAM chairman Taufan Damanik said the long-stalled investigation into the 1965 tragedy had been caused by the "tug of war" of legal and political interests among state officials. However, he asserted, the 1965 case would be his top priority as the leader of the commission. (v1a)

