

More tricks, more cheating, more political intrigues
MSM has entered a new round of the dirty game

After having issued extra company capital of GBP5.5M through more placement shares in September which were authorized by the Archipelago Resources Plc June extraordinary meeting of shareholders in London, and thus having cash money at hand again, the Indonesian subsidiary Meares Soputan Mining has started another round of political intrigues and bribing.

One of the major aims was the criminalization of the peoples movement against the gold mine, AMMALTA, in North Sulawesi's Toka Tindung area, North Minahasa. This aim was accomplished by initiating a law suit against three of the leading members of the movement. They were accused of public instigation and destruction of an empty wooden security shed that was burnt down by the angry fishing community in November 2006 in Rinondoran after they had performed a sea blockade to prevent the MSM fleet to de load heavy machinery at Rinondoran beach where the company had erected - illegally - a jetty. After months of house detention and delayed court procedures the three were finally sentenced to 18 months in prison each. A baseless decision of three judges at the Manado Court who failed to take into consideration the proves the defendants had produced, among others that witnesses for the company hadn't even been in the location where the incident happened. Thus the general conclusion was that the judges had been heavily bribed. AMMALTA appealed, and the case is looked into now by the National High Court.

During these months of AMMALTA being paralysed because their leaders were detained, the company owned Mafia organization MPI ("people for the investor") which comprises company contractors like Captn. Ridwy Lasut and a group of paid village chiefs as well as several corrupt priests and Imams of the surrounding villages, started a new campaign to goal MSM. In August the local communities all of a sudden were thrilled by the idea of a new district being created which was lobbied for by their village chiefs and clerical leaders. Almost no one missed to put the signature on lists of support distributed by community leaders to achieve this much longed for aim. Only the idea was never heard of again, but instead only weeks later a "delegation" of MPI members recruited from village chiefs and clericals appeared in Jakarta to witness before the National Parliament (DPR-RI) that they were here on the mandate of their people to push for the mining company to be given production permit. Only the endeavor failed, nor were they received by the Indonesian President as they had hoped for.

Soon after they started an academical war by organizing a day seminar at the Provincial University, UNSRAT, under the auspices of rector Prof. Lucky Sondakh, a brother of the former corrupt provincial governor A.J. Sondakh alm. who had originally opened the doors for MSM in North Sulawesi. Obviously in an effort to bring the story of the family dynsty to a success, the seminar on "Mining and Public Welfare and Health" was hastily organized to achieve "scientific" recommendations of money-minded scientists that the environmental concept submitted by MSM was safe.

Only this seminar ended in a public éclat (see August update).

Then after the company was only heard of through international press releases in which it expressed its disappointment about the further delay and confidence that through the support of unnamed high government officials the aim to start production in the first quarter 2008 would be achieved. Obviously the time (and newly acquired company capital) was used well.

In November rumors were known that one of the major political parties, GOLKAR (the former Suharto party), was in support now for MSM, as their ambitious mayor of Manado, Rimba Rogi, was secured financial support by MSM to achieve his political goal to become the new provincial governor in 2010. And true, in a regency's parliament session of the North Minahasa cabinet which was called in on November 15th, 13 Golkar and other parties' legislators out of a total of 25 members staged a Coup de politique, forcing a personal vote in favor of the company. The chairlady, PDIP member Sus Pangemanan, had refused this and postponed a decision to another session. The two vice chairmen of the Golkar party took over though and achieved a "13 pro MSM" vote, which the chairlady claims, is illegal and not acceptable.

Whatever the outcome of the political discussion will be, and although the regency's cabinet by law is under the authority of the provincial cabinet and the provincial governor— who both refuse to receive MSM – this “vote” will definitely be employed by MSM to urge the Ministry of Environment again to issue the EIA or permit to commence operation. They will argue that they have fulfilled the Ministry's condition, that the mine must seek the support of the local communities – which are represented by the corrupt legislators. How much did MSM pay them?

How much more political interference and social unrest the company will have to stir up before they will be chased out of the country? How much pride do you have, who you call yourselves representatives of the Minahasa people? How much does it need to take that pride, to sell your and the souls of your people? You will know what you have done once it is too late. And your names shall be remembered forever by all future Minahasa generations:

1. Denny Wowiling (F-PG)
2. Thomas Sagay (F-PG)
3. Sumual Paulus (F-PG)
4. Joubert Sengke (F-PG)
5. Vonny Wullur (F-PG)
6. Royke Kaloh (F-PG)
7. Junita Rarumangkey (F-PG)
8. Donnie Pinontoan (F-PG)
9. Sius Papia (F-PG)
10. Corneles Worang (F-P)
11. Sarhan Antili (F-P)
12. Archelous Tuwaidan (F-PDS)
13. Dantje Katuuk (F-PD/PKPI).

2. F-PG = Golkar; FP= Fraksi Persatuan; F-PDS = Fraksi Partai Damai Sejahtera

Press coverage on all incidents mentioned above can be provided in Indonesian language to interested individuals and organizations.

Friends of Lembeh – Bangka – Pulisan,
November 16th, 2007