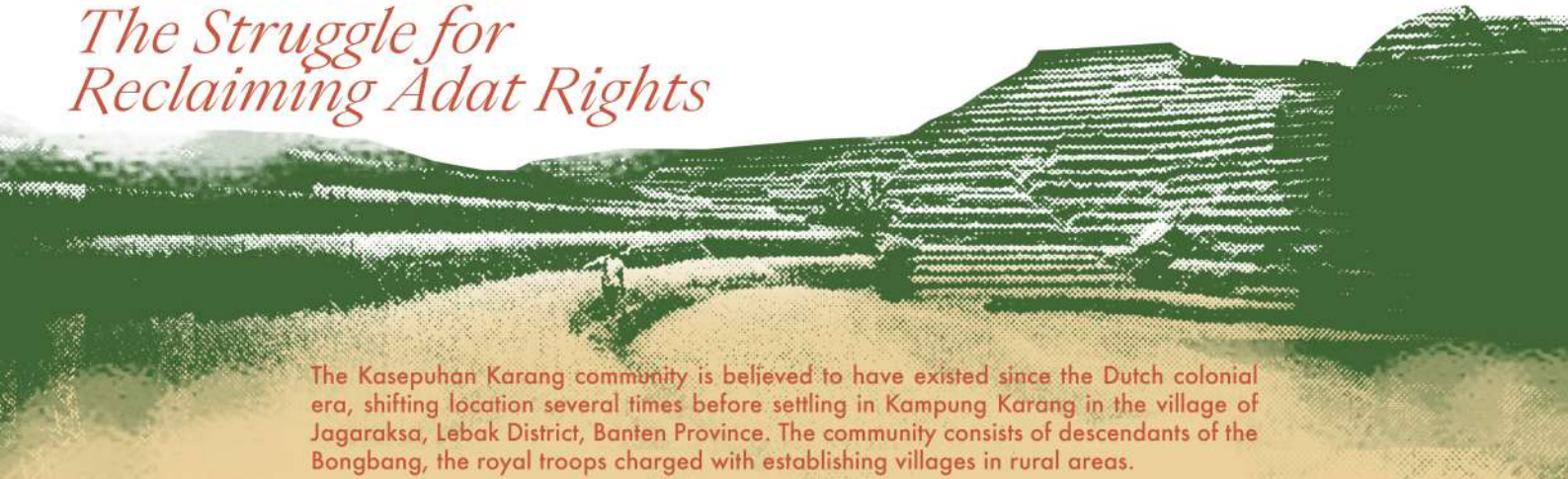


KARANG:

The Struggle for Reclaiming Adat Rights

Indonesia

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The Kasepuhan Karang community is believed to have existed since the Dutch colonial era, shifting location several times before settling in Kampung Karang in the village of Jagaraksa, Lebak District, Banten Province. The community consists of descendants of the Bongbang, the royal troops charged with establishing villages in rural areas.

They believe they have been tasked to guard the sacred sites known as **kosala**, with the responsibility passed down to them by their **anu ditipekeun (ancestors)**. Kasepuhan Karang is governed by customary institutions, led by customary leaders known as Kokolot or Olot, assisted by officials known as Baris Kolot.

**“Gunung kayuan,
lamping awian, lebak
sawahan, datar imahan.”**

Trees on the mountains, bamboo on the slopes, rice in the fields, houses on the flat lands.

This proverb serves as a guide for the management of the natural resources and the customary lands of the Kasepuhan Karang community.

CUSTOMARY LAND ZONING SYSTEM



Areas with springs are regarded as sacred and are under strict protection.



Forested lands where trees should not be cut



Foothills which may be used for rice fields



Hilly land for planting of vegetation to prevent landslides



Areas to construct ponds and small reservoirs to store water



Area for cultivating vegetables and for settlements



Flat areas can be used for constructing houses for the members of the community

CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES

There have been conflicts between the state and the Kasepuhan Karang in the management and control of customary lands since the Dutch government declared the forested area around Mount Halimun Salak as a protected forest in 1924-1934. **Restrictions were placed on the community's access to forest areas.**

The Kasepuhan Karang community believes that Mount Kendeng and the forest area surrounding it has been entrusted to their community by their ancestors, with the current generation inheriting a duty and obligation to maintain and manage the land sustainably

Discrepancies between the government's zoning of the land and the customary laws by the community:

- Government declaration of forest lands as conservation areas prohibits communities from accessing forests to meet their needs
- The community has not been consulted or invited to participate in determining the status and function of the land

ACTIONS TO RECLAIM ADAT RIGHTS

- The Kasepuhan Karang has sought legal recognition for its rights as an Indigenous People to its customary territories
- These claims were recognized through the promulgation of a decree by the district head concerning the recognition of the Indigenous Peoples in the Banten Kidul customary lands.
- In 2015, a regulation that recognizes their claims to 512 areas of land in Lebak including many areas of land claimed by the group was promulgated.
- The community acquired legal standing to apply to the Ministry of Forestry and the Environment (KLHK) for the recognition of its rights to its customary forest.
- In 2016, the Indigenous community's rights to 486 hectares of land was recognized.
- In 2017, the community established Jagaraksa Mandiri Cooperative, to facilitate the management of the customary forests in the new legal context, as well as to provide services related to the storage of agricultural produce, including grain.

[1] Based on an article by Nia Ramdhaniaty and Rojak Nurhawan published in WGII. (2021). The long struggle of Indonesia's Indigenous Peoples for conservation and living space: Fifteen stories of Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved areas and territories (ICCAs) in Indonesia.